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The Week

MR. HOOVER'S appeal on behalf of the tariff bill has not strengthened his prestige. In the first place, it will almost certainly fail to achieve the purpose intended: the chance that the bill will be passed at the special session is hardly any better than it was before he spoke, and is still dim. Moreover, his argument for hasty action had a hollow ring; the only reason he could adduce was the necessity of getting the tariff bill out of the way to clear the track for important legislation at the next regular session. What legislation does the President have in mind, so important that it would justify haste in this highly important question of the tariff schedules under which we must live for the next few years? Moreover, his reference to the Progressive-Democratic coalition was unfair by inference. He gave credence to the report that they do not intend to "give adequate protection to industry"—as though industry were not already adequately protected by the Fordney-McCumber tariff! He said not a word in criticism of the high-tariff wolves who have been doing their best to write a bill so outrageous that he could not sign it; and he recommended the flexible provision without making the all-important distinction as to whether flexibility should be within the control of the Tariff Commission, the President or Congress. Altogether, his statement is a disappointing performance. We have repeatedly pointed out that the whole tariff mess is one into which Mr. Hoover got himself needlessly. There was no necessity for him to promise more, during the campaign, than a revision of the agricultural schedules. The fight in the Senate has resulted in a complete loss of control by the regular Republicans; and it now seems likely that the Democrats and Progressives between them will write a bill far more decent than we had any right to expect, and that the President will sign it.

JOSEPH R. GRUNDY, president of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association, lobbyist for a prohibitive tariff and archetype of eastern conservatism, has finally revealed himself as a soldier in the cause of progress. Badgered by the five Senators of the Lobby Committee, he put them efficiently in their places, at the cost of revealing his own belief in government by big business. By his derisive attack on the "backward" states—not necessarily backward in culture or population, but backward in the sense that their wealth or poverty is based on agriculture rather than manufacturing—he has aroused public opinion in those states, has ensured the reëlection of progressive Senators, has strengthened the opposition to tariff schedules written for and by the manufacturers who are to profit by them, and has made it practically impossible for the tariff bill to be passed by Congress in its present form. The New Republic congratulates Mr. Grundy on his inestimable and unwilling services.

THE best news in many a day is that Senator Norris of Nebraska has decided to be a candidate to succeed himself in 1930—a decision which, we take it, is tantamount to a guarantee that the Senate will enjoy the advantage of his presence for six more years. It is no disparagement of the other progressives in the upper house to say that we hate to think what that body would be like without him. His courage and intelligence, his unswerving loyalty to the cause of the plain people, have been made more useful by his long experience in public office, which includes five terms in the House of Representatives and seventeen years in the Senate. Senator Norris is not enamored of public life: it was with

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great difficulty that his friends persuaded him to be a candidate in 1924, and he would not have entered the race in 1930 if the Republican machine in Nebraska had not so openly announced its intention of replacing him by a rigid conservative. For this bit of stupidity, the Republican machine deserves the warm gratitude of the country.

PROHIBITION in Canada suffered two heavy blows last week. On Wednesday a general election was held in Ontario, formerly a center of anti-liquor sentiment. The Conservatives, who support the recently adopted system of government sale, were returned to power by an impressive majority, winning ninety seats as against twenty-one for their combined opponents, not all of whom are prohibitionists. On Thursday, at a referendum in Nova Scotia, almost the last of the dry provinces, the majority in favor of government sale was more than 20,000, whereas at the last referendum, ten years before, there had been a majority of nearly 60,000 for absolute prohibition. The reasons for this reversal of sentiment in the Canadian provinces are largely economic. Liquor taxes are a rich source of government revenue, often the difference between a deficit and a surplus, and moreover, the sale of liquor contributes to the wealth of a province indirectly, by attracting thirsty tourists from the utopia south of the border. Indeed, people have said that the abandonment of prohibition in almost all of Canada was partially the result of its adoption in the United States. It must be admitted that most Canadians regard our "noble experiment" as a failure, and that they consider their own system of liquor sales under government control, after several years of trial, as at least a relative success.

PRESIDENT HOOVER is right in saying that it is better to build waterways than battleships. But is this the only fruitful comparison? Is it better to build waterways than railroads, for instance, if we need more carrying capacity? That depends on the relative costs of transportation. And it is just here that most of the advocates of waterways become myopic. They rarely, if ever, include the cost of constructing and maintaining the waterway improvements, which have to be paid out of taxation if they are not met out of freight rates. Few interior waterways in the country, and few that are proposed, could meet their costs on such a basis of reckoning. Mr. Hoover has ignored, so far, Mr. H. G. Moulton's devastating study of the economic unwisdom of the projected St. Lawrence waterway. It may possibly be sound economic policy to provide means of transportation at the general expense, rather than expecting them to pay their way by fares. But in that case, why not provide the cheapest and most efficient means of transportation? Why not build railroads, at public expense? We are not mourning over any losses the railroads may suffer through the competition from public waterways. But we do deplore the economic loss which is involved in providing this competition, when really cheaper transportation might be obtained by more direct methods.

FOR many years, a fight has been in progress against the international traffic in opium and other habit-forming drugs; but up to now, the results can only be described as thoroughly disappointing. Nearly two decades ago, the chief Powers agreed that the production and distribution of these drugs ought to be limited to the "legitimate needs" of the world. The difficulty was that no one knew what "legitimate needs" were. A few years ago, the phrase "medical and scientific needs" was substituted; but this, also, has been so vague a term that it has been virtually useless. As long as drugs are manufactured by several countries on a large scale, it seems hopeless to reduce the traffic to its proper limits; it is impossible to prevent smuggling, and each of the producing countries, when told that the world production was far too large, could reply that the other countries were the ones which should curtail. For the first time, however, really effective activity to do away with the traffic now seems to be in sight. At the recent meeting of the League of Nations Assembly, a resolution, proposed by Great Britain, was adopted, declaring that a limit should be put on world production, and that each of the manufacturing countries should accept a quota. Drugs cannot be smuggled if they do not exist—a fact which has long been obvious, and would have been embodied in international action years ago were it not for the fact that certain countries, for reasons of their own, pursued obstructionist tactics. While the battle is by no means over, a meeting will be called within the next eighteen months or so, at which the chief producing countries and an equal number of the chief consuming countries will be represented. At this meeting, attempts will be made to say what quantity of drugs the world needs, and to allocate this production. If the plan succeeds, this appalling traffic will have received what may prove its death blow.

THE Senate committee which was investigating Mr. Shearer and his misdeeds at Geneva in 1927 politely stepped aside during Mr. MacDonald's visit. It also kept out of the limelight while the investigation of domestic propaganda, which turned up Senator Bingham and his boy friend Eyanson, was in progress. Now, we suggest, it is time that the first committee went to work again. It has put Mr. Shearer and the shipbuilders on the stand, but thus far it has been singularly tender toward the officials of the United States Navy. It has made no real attempt to find out whether their attitude in 1927 was the undesirable one reported by Mr. Drew Pearson, a reliable and intelligent newspaper correspondent. It has almost ostentatiously refrained from ascertaining who, in the Navy Department, provided Shearer with the confidential official information which he used so successfully at Geneva. It

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is whispered in Washington that this neglect of the Navy Department by the committee has not been a piece of inadvertence; that on the contrary, some at least of the committee members have been praying that the public attention would be diverted in some other direction so that they could leave the Navy alone. We await, with fascinated interest, the course of events which will show whether or not these insinuations are well founded.

AT last a Washington jury has been found with enough intelligence and courage to decide one of the oil cases in accordance with the obvious facts. Its efforts have been supplemented by those of a judge who did not let sentimental regard for an aged man deter him from inflicting punishment. The $100,000 fine inflicted on former Secretary Fall was just equal to the amount of his bribe in the particular transaction for which he was tried, and the further sentence of a year's imprisonment has been suspended because of his age and his enfeebled health. The New Republic believes that the outcome of this case will satisfy the sense of justice of the American people, which has so often been thwarted in the course of the long series of attempts to rectify this, the blackest of all the black deeds of the Harding Administration.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us two items which crossed his desk one morning, between which he sees a pleasant contrast. One is a release from the Iron and Steel Division of the Department of Commerce, urging manufacturers to exploit the potential market for oil burners in Germany. The other is an advertisement from the Boston Transcript, signed by the American Trademark Association, urging readers to buy American products. Don't buy abroad, but sell there! The first part of the formula, according to the Boston advertisement, will "develop our pay-rolls, prosper our industries and maintain the purchasing power of our people." But how are the Germans, who are expected to buy our oil burners (and all our other products) to maintain the purchasing power of their people? By buying German products only? Perhaps good would be achieved by carrying the policy still further. Let Boston people buy only things made in Boston, and New Yorkers only things made in New York. Let the Back Bay buy only things made in the Back Bay, and Charlestown only things made in Charlestown. Let nobody buy anything at all, but simply employ himself to make everything he wants. There is no doubt that this *ne plus ultra* of protection would keep everyone fully employed. But perhaps our Boston friends cherish the delusion that Germans are going to keep on buying our oil burners, while we buy nothing from them, until we have all their money. Then we could lend the money back to them to repeat the process. If we did this forever, it would certainly be an act of charity to the Germans —they would be well supplied with our goods, without having to keep employed at all!

A DISPATCH from the Federated Press tells us that 100,000 are out of work in Detroit, due to the shutdowns of automobile factories which produced cars so feverishly in the first half of this year. It is undoubtedly true that our present equipment for making automobiles can in nine months turn out more than can be sold for a year. This is the price we pay for competition and lack of plan. It is also the price we pay for the lack of a sufficient market, due to low farm earnings, low wages in mines and textile mills, and retarded prosperity in Europe and elsewhere, conditions which arise in large measure from protective tariffs. The automobile industry was always irregular in operation, and caused much waste and suffering through unemployment, but financially its stronger units have so far been on velvet because of the continually expanding market. When, for any reason, the limits of that market are reached for any considerable length of time, it will join the ranks of over-equipped and depressed industries, along with coal and cotton textiles. Then it will either continue for a long time to be a burden on the nation's economic life, or it will be consolidated and reorganized at the cost of much temporary waste and loss. Messrs. Ford, duPont, Chrysler and the rest will in the end have to adopt a different economic philosophy, if they are to continue to receive the plaudits of an enraptured world as industrial wizards. It is too bad that their conversion did not begin early enough to avoid the present state of chaos.

JOHN ROACH STRATON, who died last week at the age of fifty-four, was typical of a persistent contrast in our national life, a contrast between spirit and technique. In spirit, he was a Baptist of the old school, attached to the letter of the Old Testament; in technique, he was a New Yorker of the twentieth century. He preached against evolution, and he preached over the radio. He attacked the morals of the younger generation, and attacked them almost in the language of the tabloid press. He campaigned for temperance, intemperately. He planned a skyscraper church as a shrine for doctrines in which he believed as literally as did the tent-dwelling patriarchs to whom they were first proclaimed in Palestine. And he quarreled with four trustees of this church because, although slightly more liberal in religious questions, they were more conservative in matters of finance. In general, he used all the technical resources of modern life to oppose the modern spirit. A lean crusader, a relentless fighter in an age when most arguments die in lethargy, he was respected by some of his most bitter opponents. However, it is to be questioned whether his attacks on evolution did not encourage people to read Darwin, whether his sermons on modern immorality did not encourage modern sensationalism, and whether his battle with the atheists, by the violence of his methods, did not lend strength to opponents who were being disregarded.

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WE TRUST that the negotiations on international disarmament will meet with more success than the stern maneuvers which have not resulted in the resumption of football relations between West Point and Annapolis. Admirals and generals have entered into controversy and almost into open warfare: "Bring on your 2,000 midshipmen," exclaims Major General William R. Smith, Superintendent of West Point, "and our 1,200 cadets will play them eleven at a time." The military authorities have been severely censured in Congress, by a Republican from Illinois; the Secretary of War has thundered against Annapolis; the Secretary of the Navy has angrily replied; there are rumors of intervention from higher quarters; and the total result is even more negative than that of the Geneva Conference. Both academies, unwilling to concede parity, continue to build up their football armaments, even though war is "unthinkable."

IF THE game were played, it would be played in Chicago. If it were played in Chicago, Illinois would be safe for the G. O. P. at the next election. Upon the Illinois election may turn the fate of the Administration program—the fate of the country—the fate of disarmament; upon it may depend, who knows, the possibility of another world war. All of which is very interesting; but much more interesting, to us, is the question of whether it will dawn upon the young men who study and play games at West Point and Annapolis, and on the young men in other institutions of learning in the country, that their own importance in the colossal business of football is about the same as that of the wooden goalposts. The cadets and midshipmen are supposed to take orders, and do; and whether these orders send them to Chicago for a football game or to Nicaragua for a war is six of one and half a dozen of the other.

THE resignation of John V. A. MacMurray, Minister to China, should have an interesting effect upon relations between that country and the United States. Mr. MacMurray is an able and experienced diplomat; but his attitude toward the country to which he has been accredited has always been marked by "the Shanghai mind." He has not been sympathetic toward the Chinese demand for freedom from foreign impositions, and his opinion has, obviously, been received with great respect in Washington. His resignation opens the door for the selection of someone much more acceptable, not in the technical but in the real sense, to China.

SENATOR BINGHAM'S troubles are not ended with the incident of his employing Eyanson. He is under fire again, the charge being that he has acted in too close harmony with the air-craft interests. It is alleged that an "aviation trust" exists in the United States; that it has been active in bringing pressure to bear on Congress; that it has forced inferior equipment upon the Army and Navy flying services, and that many fatalities have been caused in consequence. These are grave charges, but they are not new. Ever since the notorious scandals in connection with the production of Liberty motors during the War, allegations have been made against the industry, and some of them with ample justification. Here is certainly another subject for investigation by a senatorial committee of such a caliber that it will not be afraid to find out the facts, no matter how important the persons involved.

Can the Market Be Controlled?

IS THERE anybody who would argue that the behavior of the stock exchange during the past year has been a useful element in the nation's life? What good does it do for wealth—even paper wealth—to be won and lost so quickly? While the market was going up, the successful bulls and those who profited by their over-confidence loudly proclaimed, despite all critics, the virtues of speculation for the rise, but many of these same forces now console the speculators for their losses only by pointing out their folly. The question is insistent, what could have been done to prevent what has happened? What can be done to prevent its happening again?

The New Republic is not among those who fear industrial disaster as a result of the Wall Street panic. Some of the luxury trades will of course be hit, but they do not constitute the backbone of production and trade. Industry may now decline, but if this happens it will be largely as a consequence of tendencies which would have been injurious even if the market had retained its self-possession. The disturbance which the vagaries of stock speculation cause, in so far as it is economic, occurs as much during the rise of prices as after the fall. The diversion of savings and credit to operations in stocks has had unfortunate results. Anyone dependent on bank credit for normal operations has been having a hard time for at least six months. There are localities where even first mortgages, granted to home-owners on the safest of security, have been called or not renewed, where building operations are stagnant because of a shortage of loanable funds. If it had not been for the money which the Farm Board was able to lend for holding wheat and cotton, the stock crisis would have hit the farmers a body blow during their chief marketing season, first because people with money could use it to greater advantage in buying stocks or lending on security collateral than in financing crop operations, next because many of those dealing on the commodity exchanges liquidated their holdings in order to protect their shares. Many business men deserted their normal occupations because they could make so much more so easily by speculation. This must have affected the total of useful production and trade. Such a vast amount of energy and credit utilized in pursuing a phantom cannot be

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thought of as anything else than economic waste.

The intangible losses are also important. Something subtly harmful to the spirit of the nation occurs when so many people make so much money without earning it by productive labor. Senses of values are upset. It is perhaps justifiable to defend our material culture on the ground that a competence of material things is necessary as a basis for leisure, security and appreciation of the finer flowers of human effort. But there is no net cultural gain in an economic order which dumps untold wealth into the hands of hundreds of thousands who happen to guess right and gamble well, but who do not thus create a single object or idea. And when the wealth is as suddenly withdrawn, a gaping hole is left. How much might this ingenuity not have accomplished, if it had not been applied so single-mindedly to evanescent personal fortune?

This argument does not, of course, lead us to advocate either abolition of the stock market or personal renunciation of speculation, on moral grounds. In theory, the stock market is a useful institution in a capitalist order. It is supposed to furnish a place where those who want to buy or sell shares of ownership in productive resources can do so. Such buying and selling is essential, as long as private ownership exists. An industrial organization, let us say, needs capital to enlarge its production. It offers shares of stock. People who have saved money want to put it to work for them. They buy shares. It is convenient to have a central market where this can be done. It is useful to have a place where the interplay of buyers and sellers can determine the values of what is for sale. Even speculators may contribute, according to theory, to the usefulness of such an institution. By buying or selling according to their estimates of future value, they shoulder many of the risks inherent in such a market. They help to stabilize prices. The use of credit for lending to investors or speculators can also be justified. It helps to carry new securities until they can be absorbed by investors. It smooths over the rough places. If the stock market operated according to theory, there would be little complaint—until we could devise better ways to accomplish the same result.

The trouble is that it has not operated according to theory, any more than competitive business has always operated according to the doctrines of classical economics. And the specific trouble with it has been, this time, inflation and deflation, of much the same sort as business suffered from in 1919, 1920 and 1921. Somehow or other, prices of stocks got to rising continuously above their real investment values, just as prices of commodities rose above the values at which they could ultimately be sold, in the post-War business crisis. This encouraged speculation for the rise, which in itself exaggerated the unsound tendency. It made it unduly profitable to lend money to speculators, and attracted enormous ...nds to be used for their purpose. It gave a stim-...siness of issuing and floating stock, so that every excuse for doing so was seized upon, regardless of productive industry's need or lack of need for the money. Calculations indicate that much less than half of the money recently sought to be raised by security issues was destined for productive use in industry—the rest was intended for the realization of quick profits by existing stockholders, promoters, consolidators, and investment bankers, on the basis of the rising market values at which stock could be sold. The bull market, in every aspect, fed on itself, and grew by what it fed on.

Many have traced this disease to lack of proper control of credit—just as they traced the business inflation of 1920 to the same source. In so far as credit was a contributing cause, the chief agency of control was, of course, the Federal Reserve authorities. They have been criticized by conservatives, and perhaps justly, for keeping the rediscount rate artificially low until the upward movement of the past three years was well under way. But if they are at fault for this reason, their choice was a forced one. They made it in order to keep the New York rate below the London rate. If they had not done so, gold would have continued to fl... into this country in large amounts, and would ... self have permitted credit inflation. Also, ... of England would have been seriously ... in maintaining its gold reserve. T... causes runs back to what Mr. J. M... was too early a resumption of ... the Bank of England, and perh... of the gold standard itself. C... inflation became serious, how... serve did everything it dare... diversion of credit to specul... ings earned it much abuse ... but were ineffectual. It m... series of sharp rises of the ... in the movement, but it did n... fear of the effect on industry ... contented itself with a rise ... count rate, combined with a r... for acceptance, and with measu... reserves as liquid as possible, and ... market ride to its fall unchided. Feder... policy undoubtedly prevented the full force ... gale from being felt by business. And whe... crash came, and others withdrew over two ... lion dollars from the call money market in ... week, the New York banks were ready, an... a billion dollars into it. They could not have done so, if Federal Reserve policy had been dictated by the bulls who abused it.

But all this did not much influence the spasm of the market itself. There were two leading reasons for this. One was, that the situation resulted not merely from an abundant supply of credit, but from an insistent demand for it. The other was, that this demand for credit raised the interest rate on security loans to a point where funds were poured into the market from private corporations and other sources which the Federal Reserve authori-

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ties could not control, except by moral suasion. The demand for credit was certainly heightened by the bullish statements, at moments when the market showed signs of reaction to more normal levels, made by prominent persons who did not appreciate the dangers of inflation, or who did not care about it. Chief among these were President Coolidge and Secretary Mellon. It is well that they should be blamed, and that others in the future should be wary of following their example.

Nobody is entitled to say, without exhaustive investigation and discussion, what in particular can be done to plug the gaps in social control of economic processes which the experience of the past months has revealed. Clearly, however, there must be found some means which will adjust the issuance of securities more closely to the real needs of industry, not allowing it to depend on the profits of the promoters and stock-selling institutions. There must be some social control of the use which private business makes of its surplus funds. There must be a good deal of popular education concerning the whole matter. We cannot hope to suppress the human instinct to gamble, but we may limit its capacity for harm in a realm which is so closely associated with the life of the nation. We may do much to make the stock market serve the purposes it is supposed to serve.

Good Straws

or may not tell us that we hing by what history tells us; tle portents here and there t least the outlines of a case that the world has learned a s of 1914-1918. Not much, ng the mood of the years im- ace broke out, as they used to ope, anything at all is to be d as miraculous.

e United States, which by all his- ts should be loud in protestations of dship and esteem and should be silent getic in arming and in aligning combinations st each other, are instead sitting down to- ner to face the differences between them and try compose them. The effort may fail, but that it ld be made at all, and in that spirit, is some- ng new in international relations, and already the fact of its being made has had a salutary psychological effect. One wonders whether similar efforts in the years before 1914 might not have changed the psychology which made the war inevitable.

In Europe, there is the astonishing success of a German war book which mordantly, though artistically, deflates the romance of war, which has not a word of detraction of the enemy, which treats of conventional patriotism as a lapse from sanity. In Germany itself it has been not only a success but a sensation, despite the efforts of the militarists to keep the glory of arms burnished, and the sense of national humiliation whipped up for *revanche*. The Nationalists, it is true, are counter-attacking with a campaign of vilification against the book as treason and against Remarque, the author, as a pacifist, liar and befouler of his own nest, but what is more significant is that they felt obliged to do so. Five years ago it is probable that only a Communist or extreme left-wing Social Democratic publishing house would have brought the book out and few would have read it. In England, where Hun was a synonym for German, the book is a best seller and, more surprisingly, in France also—five years after Poincaré's Sunday sermons on the Ruhr and the French scientists' refusal to meet in scientific conventions with German scientists!

"Journey's End," an English war play, is acclaimed in Germany. Like "All Quiet on the Western Front," it is without any abuse of the enemy. There is only one reference to the Germans, and that is favorable. There has been a marked recrudescence of war literature and in all of it patriotism is subordinated, glory gently derided and the enemy pictured as a helpless victim like one's own people. It is this sense of the enemy's humanness, this sense that all the little obscure people on both sides were alike in being sacrificed to folly not of their own making, that is working into European consciousness. And that also is unprecedented, only ten years after a bitter war. One has but to remember what northern children were taught about the South and southern children about the North a full generation after the Civil War. Rarely if ever before have war passions so soon grown cold.

More than anti-war pacts, more than arbitration treaties and disarmament conferences, this gives ground for hope. It is not too robust a hope. No doubt the machinery of propaganda, skillfully directed by men who knew its purpose, could quickly drive the masses—led by the educated classes—into line for war again, but it would not be quite so easy as before. The machinery would have to be more cunningly contrived and more subtly managed. Measured by the rate of human progress for two thousand years, this is gain enough for ten.

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"Faith, Hope and Parity"

SOMEWHERE I have heard or read or invented—how seldom we know whence phrases come!—the description of the Anglo-American manifestation of friendship as an experiment in faith, hope and parity. And it seems to me that the phrase hits off the situation. There is a definite agreement on the principle of parity, whatever that may mean; and apart from this rather disputable quality which is to apply to the two navies, there is merely a warm but welcome belief in the coöperation and amity of great Britain and the United States. That is enough. More would be dangerous. Above all, we must be careful of lending color to the accusation that the English-speaking peoples are united against the rest of the world. It is an accusation that is lightly made. It is foolish. It is mischievous. But it is insistent.

Throughout my own visit to the United States—in the wake of Ramsay MacDonald, and by no means in his *entourage*—I have repeatedly been asked the same question: Why do European countries suppose there is some move towards an Anglo-American alliance, despite official disclaimers? There appears to be perturbation at the prospect; and truly, I think, it would be unfortunate were there the smallest truth in the suggestion—unfortunate because, while I trust the two peoples with whom I am most closely akin will become even more conscious of their fraternity than they are at present, experience and the teaching of history convinces me of the peril of alliances, which cannot but provoke counter-alliances, and, therefore, divide up mankind into potential enemies. That is why it is regrettable that a few commentators, both British and American, have spoken of a "pooling" of navies, and have assumed that the cause of progress is served by imposing an Anglo-American brand of peace on quarrelsome nations. It is our besetting sin to imagine ourselves morally superior; and this alleged paternal moral superiority is thought to justify a kind of coercion in the interests of pacifism. There is a slant towards self-righteousness which permits—nay, demands—predominance, to be used, of course, to the most desirable ends. The fallacy of this attitude is that it omits the important fact that no military or naval might can go permanently unchallenged. Coercion is always wrong; and even the ghost of it must not be allowed to creep into the idea of peace.

There is no more perilous doctrine than that of Imperialism, and yet I think I discern an inclination towards Imperialism in a number of articles on the MacDonald visit. I do not complain that the Imperialist is a war-monger; generally speaking he is not—he is infinitely worse; he is a peacemaker. The Imperialist puts on an almost tragic air of self-importance. He is profoundly aware of his "mission." On his shoulders lies the burden of this naughty world; and he bears it pathetically but proudly. "We," he says, "have much in common. Particularly have we this in common—that we are noble in our intentions, that we are peculiarly fitted to guide others, that we are well qualified to govern the universe." Now, just as no person is good enough to dictate to his fellows, so no nation, or combination of nations, is good enough to dictate to its fellow-nations.

Such an interpretation, which is woefully incorrect, tends to pervert and misrepresent the right endeavors of the American President and the British Prime Minister. European suspicions must be allayed; otherwise more harm than good will be wrought. The peace purpose will be scouted, and there will remain only a continental combination against an Anglo-Saxon combination. France and Italy will drop their differences—or perhaps use them—to resist the naval "bosses"; and even Germany will examine, with its neighbors, the possibility of forming what is euphemistically called the "United States of Europe."

But perhaps I am putting things in the wrong order; perhaps I should say that continental distrust arises from the precedent continental conditions and from the congenital continental mentality. That version would be substantially true; though the shuttle-motion of cause and consequence flies to and fro. While we must take care lest ill-advised boosting of the Anglo-American negotiations confirms European diplomatists in their belief that something inimical to their interests (as they conceive them) is being concocted, the root of European misgivings lies deep in diplomatic philosophy. In the Foreign Office there is an apparently ineradicable habit of thinking in terms of international groupings. The peoples are simpler and sincerer—so that statesmen who aim at popularity must make fine peace speeches. The well trained diplomatist is sceptical, and his job is to double his country's strength by contracting alliances. Sometimes the same person is both public statesman and secret diplomatist.

Let it not be charged against me that I am pessimistic or cynical. I seek to explain the confusion of thought, the discrepancy between political protestation and professional practice. We cannot afford to ignore facts if we would change them. The idealists seldom stop to inquire, for example, what is meant by the word peace. Yet it means things that are diametrically opposed. When it is used at Geneva or elsewhere we should consider whether

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is employed as a synonym for security, for the *status quo*, for the perpetuation of injustices; or whether it is employed in a positive sense as indicating a new method of removing injustices without having recourse to war, of inducing the war profiteers among the nations to give up their ill-gotten gains if an impartial body, revising treaties, holds that they should. It is important for us to have definitions; for otherwise we merely delude ourselves, and disillusionment will bring a dreadful reaction.

Here is no digression; if we recognize that phrase-making is not peace-making, we shall try to get behind the expression "United States of Europe," and if we get behind that fine-sounding expression we shall better understand the European fear—unfounded as it is—of an Anglo-American entente.

The United States of Europe is, for the diplomatists, just another synonym for alliances. In the process of boiling-down, of converting vague rhetoric into concrete diplomacy, the United States of Europe may become France and its allies. Ever since the War there has been an uninterrupted search for allies—Jugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and so forth—to say nothing of the attempt to give substance to the empty phrase Entente Cordiale, and of the Geneva Protocol, and of the demand for automatic "sanctions" against any nation that should offend, and of the whole business of organizing things as they are. This is not a criticism or a complaint; it is simply a realistic statement. That is how the diplomatic mind still works; and Geneva has been helpful to them in that it has supplied a convenient "smoke-screen of peace" without seriously interfering with the old system.

Lately there has been talk of a Franco-German military alliance, to which Poland would be invited to adhere; and the Little Entente would doubtless be obliged to hang on to the skirts of "the greatest empire since that of Charlemagne." The idea is not as negligible as it seems to be at first sight. I do not expect it to be realized, but it has been gravely discussed by the most responsible authorities; and when there is so much to-do about trumpery and trivial pacts, apocryphal or ephemeral, which happen to be disclosed sensationally, I do not understand why the biggest proposal yet made in Europe, a proposal whose adoption would transform immeasurably the problems of Europe, should be almost ignored. Perhaps it is because it is not secret. Herr Rechberg, a prime mover in the Franco-German economic accords, who has seen the two countries effect alliances in textiles, potash, chemicals and metallurgy, advocates his scheme of a Franco-German military alliance—a revival of a Charlemagne Empire, as he blatantly and unblushingly calls it—in both French and German newspapers. He was received by Poincaré, by Painlevé (French War Minister) and by many influential deputies and senators. General Walsch went to Berlin and General von der Lippe came to Paris. Whatever the difficulties, the scheme is of more immediate and practical importance than the nebulous and meaningless "United States of Europe." Or perhaps it *is* the "United States of Europe."

Anyhow, whatever be the fate of the plan to "pool" French and German (and Polish) armies, Europe is already caught in a net of alliances which the League of Nations, in my opinion wrongfully, has accepted as in consonance with the Covenant. There are a dozen pacts which pledge their signatories to consult with each other, to take concerted action against a hypothetical enemy. But this pledge surely makes nonsense of the general promise of the Covenant that all the countries shall form one League, and shall submit to the rulings of a central and unbiased authority which ought not to be divided up into separate groups with particular interests to defend. A and B are committed to each other; then surely C and D are entitled to stand together against A and B. And if there should be a quarrel between A and C what can the League do if B and D automatically range themselves on opposite sides? The whole European situation is vitally affected by alliances; they are the basis of European relations, and although I foresee many changes, for there is as yet no crystallization, yet the League cannot properly operate while diplomatists are interested in alliances. Alliances must be fatal: out of them sprang the great War. . . . But I do not think I need argue, in this place, against the underlying diplomatic theory; we had hoped to smash the system. Every time I hear of an agreement I immediately look out for the wolf's ears of an alliance.

So do all Europeans of diplomatic training. The man whose job it is to make alliances—or at least to pretend to make them, to feint and parry and counter—naturally imagines that it is the job of Hoover and MacDonald either to make a real alliance, or to threaten to do so. A threat of an alliance may be as effective a reply as an alliance. If there are those who are already stammering "European," shall we not show them that there are greater nations who can respond in English? A European Federation? Can it not be capped by a union of the British Empire and the United States? The point is that when there is the smallest hint of any set of nations coming together (not in a war-like way, but for the sort of peace that depends on the ultimate possibility of coercion) then there is certainly another set of nations who regard their coming together as a diplomatic retort.

The utmost caution, then, is essential in avoiding declarations that can possibly be construed as implying an Anglo-American alliance. There is, and can be, no such thing. To anybody acquainted with the American mentality the idea is fantastic; but unfortunately there are, we must remember, many people who can never understand either the British or the American mentality. The greatest temptation for orators and writers is to indulge in non-

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sense about the elevated purpose of Great Britain and the United States, who together can give the world a new Roman peace. Peace based on domination, real or imagined, is precarious; it must be founded on universal good will.

Nevertheless, having written this warning, which I think necessary, I would add that in my view the Anglo-American accord should be maintained in the teeth of all antagonism. Great Britain and the United States have agreed not so much on tonnage figures as on the removal of the thought of rivalry in their relations, political as well as purely naval. Now it is surely incredibly ridiculous to put back the thought of rivalry because it might happen that France and Italy (let us say) cannot settle their differences. What! We cannot be friends without first submitting our friendship to the judgment of a consequence? We must make our friendship contingent on the friendship of others? That is a crazy demand; and although I think it excellent to aim at a five-power accord, we cannot let inability to hit that target destroy a two-power accord which can easily be converted into a three-power accord. The more comprehensive the agreement the better; but perfection must not be made the foe of good.

The catch-word is parity. England and America have accepted something they call parity. Now France and Italy want parity, though the naval conditions of the two countries cannot even be compared. There is really no parity, when conditions are similar; and when they are entirely different, parity becomes a foolish word. I lately applied it to the Cubs and the Athletics, which are, as a few readers may know, baseball teams. The Cubs and the Athletics strove for parity; they had parity in the number of players, parity in training and managerial resources, parity in equipment, parity in every material sense. And yet one team beat the other, for there is no absolute parity in our poor old world. . . . Yet it does not matter whether there is or can be parity in naval affairs, so far as Great Britain and the United States are concerned, for they can never, like baseball teams, put their parity to the proof. If they have something that looks sufficiently like parity, that is all that even Senator Moses need worry about, for the whole point of the Anglo-American agreement is not in the parity but in the affirmation that if there is not parity nobody will ever find it out in actual combat! What has already been done—independently and irrespectively of the results of the January conferences—is to establish between England and America a state of "faith, hope and parity"—these three, and the least of them is parity.

SISLEY HUDDLESTON.

T. S. Eliot

I HAVE spoken of the similarity between the English seventeenth-century poets and the French nineteenth-century Symbolists. The poetry of T. S. Eliot has, in our own time, brought together these two traditions, as it is Eliot who, so far as I know, has for the first time called attention, in his criticism, to the affinity between them. "The form," he says, "in which I began to write, in 1908 or 1909, was directly drawn from the study of Laforgue together with the later Elizabethan drama; and I do not know anyone who started from exactly that point."

I have so far, in discussing the early Symbolists, spoken chiefly of Mallarmé. But T. S. Eliot derived, as he indicates, from a different branch of the Symbolist tradition. In 1873, there had appeared in Paris a book of poems called "Les Amours Jaunes," by a man who called himself Tristan Corbière. "Les Amours Jaunes" was received with complete indifference, and scarcely more than a year afterwards the writer died of consumption. Only thirty at the time of his death, Tristan Corbière, the son of a sea captain who had himself written sea stories, had been an eccentric maladjusted man: a born writer, with a good education, he had suffered from, at the same time that he had boasted of, his ugliness and unsociability, sleeping in Paris during the day, spending the nights in the cafés or at his verses, and at dawn greeting the Paris harlots as they emerged from the station house or the hotel with the same half-harsh, half-tender fellow-feeling for the alien to conventional society which, when at home in his native Brittany, caused him to escape the house of his family and seek the company of the customs-men and the sailors of the port—living skeleton and invalid as he was, performing prodigies of courage and endurance in the navigation of a little cutter which he sailed by preference in the worst possible weather. Melancholy, with a feverishly active mind, full of groanings and vulgar pleasantries, he used to amuse himself by going about in convict's clothes and, on one occasion, on a visit to Rome, appeared in the streets in evening dress, wearing a miter on his head and leading a pig decorated with ribbons. And Corbière's poetry was a poetry of the outlaw: often colloquial and homely, yet with a rhetoric of fantastic slang; often with the manner of slapdash doggerel, yet sure of its own morose artistic effects; full of the parade of romantic personality, yet incessantly humiliating itself with a self-mockery scurrilous and savage, from which, as Huysmans said,

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would break without warning "a cry of sharp pain, like the breaking of a 'cello string"—Corbière's verse brought back into French poetry qualities which had been quite foreign to its spirit since the time of Villon.

So outlandish, in fact, did Corbière appear even from the Romanticist point of view, that he was put down, when he was thought of at all, as not merely unseemly but insane—till Paul Verlaine, in 1884, paid tribute to him in a series of articles, "Les Poètes Maudits," which was one of the important critical events in the development of Symbolism. Verlaine himself, a more accomplished artist, but a less original and interesting personality, had been strongly influenced by "Les Amours Jaunes"—he seems, indeed, to have caught over from Corbière, not merely certain artistic effects, but even something of his own poetic personality, his peculiar accent of wistful naïveté: compare Corbière's "Rondels pour Après" with Verlaine's sonnet which begins "*L'espoir luit comme un brin de paille dans l'étable*"; or "Paria" with "Casper Hauser."

But there was another French poet besides Verlaine who carried on the tradition of Corbière, and who is more closely allied to him than Verlaine. Jules Laforgue, nineteen years younger than Corbière, like him tubercular, and dead at twenty-seven, further developed and, at that later date, had much greater immediate success with, that tone of poignant-ironic, grandiose-slangy, scurrilous-naïve, of which Corbière seems to have been the inventor. The son of a schoolmaster, Laforgue, for all his nonchalance in handling rudely the conventions of French poetry, is more a professional man of letters than Corbière. He even errs through preciosity in his fashion: what with Corbière seems a personal and inevitable, if eccentric, manner of speech, in Jules Laforgue seems self-conscious and deliberate, almost sometimes a literary exercise. His gentleness and wistfulness are those of a sick well-cared-for child; his asperities, his surprising images, his coquetries, his cynicism, and his impudence, are those of a spoiled clever schoolboy.

Yet Laforgue is a very fine poet and one of the most remarkable of the Symbolists. He and Corbière had brought to Symbolism a new variety of vocabulary and a new complexity of feeling. With Mallarmé, it may be said that, on the whole, it is the imagery, not the feeling, which is complex: Mallarmé, though sometimes playful, is classical in the sense (as Yeats and Paul Valéry are) that he sustains a certain grandeur of tone. But it is from the conversational-ironic, rather than from the high esthetic, tradition of Symbolism that T. S. Eliot derives. Corbière and Laforgue are almost everywhere in his early work. The emphatic witty quatrains of Corbière, with their sudden lapses into tenderness or pathos, are heard again in the satiric poems of Eliot: a poem like "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" would hardly, one imagines, have been written without Corbière's "Rapsode Foraine." And as "Conversation Galante" derives clearly from certain poems in Laforgue's "Les Complaintes" and "L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune," so the more elaborate "Portrait of a Lady" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" follow closely the longer poems of Laforgue. Compare the conclusion of "Mr. Prufrock" with the conclusion of the early version of Laforgue's poem "Légende":

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat
a peach!
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk
upon the beach,
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and
brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Hier l'orchestre attaqua
Sa dernière polka.

Oh! l'automne, l'automne!
Les casinos
Qu'on abandonne
Remisent leurs pianos! . . .

Phrases, verroteries,
Caillots de souvenirs.
Oh! comme elle est maigrie!
Que vais-je devenir? . . .

Adieu! Les filles d'ifs dans les grisailles
Ont l'air de pleureuses de funerailles
Sous l'autan noir qui veut que tout s'en aille.

Assez, assez,
C'est toi qui as commencé.

Va, ce n'est plus l'odeur de tes fourrures.
Va, vos moindres clins d'yeux sont des parjures.
Tais-toi, avec vous autres rien ne dure.

Tais-toi, tais-toi,
On n'aime qu'une fois . . .

Here it will be seen that Eliot has reproduced Laforgue's irregular metrical scheme almost line for line. Furthermore, the subject of Laforgue's poem—the hesitations and constraints of a man either too timid or too disillusioned to make love to a woman who provokes his ironic pity at the same time that she stirs bursts of stifled emotion—has a strong resemblance to the subjects of "Mr. Prufrock" and the "Portrait of a Lady." And in another poem, "La Figlia che Piange," Eliot has

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adapted a line of Laforgue's: *"Simple et sans foi comme un bonjour"*—"Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand." He has even brought over into English some of the unstressed effect of French verse: how different, for example, is the alexandrine just quoted from the classical English alexandrine, "Which like a wounded snake drags its slow length along," or "With sparkless ashes loads an unlamented urn."

It must not be supposed, however, that Eliot is not original or that he is not the equal of either of his masters. Those longer poems which Laforgue was constructing at the time of his death out of more fragmentary and less mature work are certainly his most interesting and successful productions: their metrical flexibility and their fidelity to the pathetic-ironic, worldly-esthetic moods of the *fin de siècle* temperament were a new artistic achievement in French poetry. Yet, though Eliot has, in certain obvious respects, applied Laforgue's formula so consistently, he cannot be described as an imitator because he is in some ways a superior artist. He is more mature than Laforgue ever was, and his workmanship is perfect in a way that Corbière's and Laforgue's rarely were. T. S. Eliot's peculiar distinction lies, as Clive Bell has said, in his "phrasing." Laforgue's images are often far-fetched and inappropriately grotesque: his sins in this respect are really very closely akin to those of the English metaphysical poets; but Eliot's taste is absolutely sure—his images always precisely right. And the impression that Eliot leaves, even in these earliest poems, is clear, vivid and unforgettable: we do not subordinate him to his Symbolist predecessors any more than, when we find him, as in "Gerontion," writing in the rhythms of late Elizabethan blank-verse, we associate him with Middleton or Webster.

When we come to examine Eliot's themes, we recognize first something which we have found already in Laforgue, but which appears in Eliot in a more intense form. One of the principal preoccupations of Flaubert—a great hero of Eliot's, as of Eliot's fellow-poet, Ezra Pound—had been the inferiority of the present to the past: the Romantics had discovered the possibilities of historical imagination; with their thirst for magnificence and grandeur, they had located these qualities in past societies—they had turned habitually to Greece and Rome, to the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance. And Flaubert, with all the Romantic appetite for the glorious, the gorgeous, the exalted, constraining himself to the Naturalist's confrontation of the actual nineteenth-century world in which he lived, pursued two parallel lines of fiction which lent significance and relief to each other. On the one hand, he reconstructed, in "Salammbô" and in "La Tentation de Saint-Antoine," the splendid barbarities of the pagan world and the heroic piety of the early Christian; and, on the other, he caricatured, in "Madame Bovary," in "L'Education Sentimentale" and in "Bouvard et Pécuchet," the pusillanimity and mediocrity of contemporary bourgeois France. This whole point of view of Flaubert's—particularly pointed in "Trois Contes," where the three periods are contrasted in one book—was destined profoundly to affect modern literature. We shall encounter it later on in Joyce; but in the meantime we must note its reappearance in the poetry of Eliot. Eliot, like Flaubert, feels at every turn that human life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has become ignoble, sordid or tame, and he is haunted and tormented by intimations that it has once been otherwise. In "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar," the young American tourist in Venice, superseded in his affair with the Princess Volupine by a vulgar Austrian Jew, meditates on the clipped wings and pared claws of the Lion of St. Mark's, the symbol of the old arrogant opulent Venice and of the age when such a city was possible; in "A Cooking Egg," the poet asks himself, during a call upon a very mild, dull spinster: "Where are the eagles and the trumpets?" and returns the saddened answer, "Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps." In "Lune de Miel," the Middle Western American travelers, stifled with the summer heat and devoured by the bed-bugs of Ravenna, are contrasted with the noble crumbling beauty of the old Byzantine church less than a league away, of which they are unaware and to which they have no relation; and in "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service," the modern clergymen and their arid creed are contrasted with the fresh religious feeling of a picture of the baptism of Christ by "a painter of the Umbrian school." In the best and most effective of these poems, "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," the poet, during a drowsy, idiotic and mildly sinister scene in some low dive, where two of the girls are supposed to be plotting against one of the men, remembers, at the sound of nightingales singing, the murder of Agamemnon in Aeschylus:

> The host with someone indistinct
> Converses at the door apart,
> The nightingales are singing near
> The Convent of the Sacred Heart,
>
> And sang within the bloody wood
> When Agamemnon cried aloud,
> And let their liquid siftings fall
> To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

But another theme emerges in Eliot's poetry, a theme as little characteristic of French as it is of English literature—the theme of sterility, of emotional starvation. T. S. Eliot, though born in St. Louis, comes of New England stock and was educated at Harvard; and he is in some ways a typical product of the New England civilization. He has all of the Puritan fastidiousness, scrupulousness, prudence and preoccupation with moral questions; and one of the principal subjects of his poetry is that regret at situations unexplored, that dark rankling of passions inhibited, which has figured so conspicuously in the work of the American writers

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of New England and New York from Hawthorne to Edith Wharton. T. S. Eliot, in this respect, has much in common with Henry James. Mr. Prufrock and the poet of the "Portrait of a Lady," with their helpless sadness at having dared too little, correspond exactly to the middle-aged heroes of "The Ambassadors" and "The Beast in the Jungle," realizing sadly too late in life that they have lived too cautiously and too poorly. The fear of life, in Henry James, is closely bound up with the fear of vulgarity. And Eliot, also, fears vulgarity —which he embodies in his symbolic figure of "Apeneck Sweeney"—at the same time that he is fascinated by it. Yet he chafes at the limitations and pretenses of the culture represented by Boston —a society "quite uncivilized," as he says, "but refined beyond the point of civilization." He has some amusing satiric poems about old New England ladies, and he meditates, as he walks the Boston streets, on his way to call on his Cousin Harriet, how

> evening quickens faintly in the street,
> Wakening the appetites of life in some
> And to others bringing the Boston Evening Transcript.

And the "Portrait of a Lady," whether the scene be laid in Boston or in London, is essentially a poem of that New England society "refined beyond the point of civilization": from the Lady, who serves tea among lighted candles—"an atmosphere of Juliet's tomb"—with her dispiriting combination of culture with flattery and flirtation—her slightly stale and faded gush about Chopin and her memories of Paris in the spring—the poet is seized with a desire to flee:

> I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
> For what she has said to me?
> You will see me any morning in the park
> Reading the comics and the sporting page.
> Particularly I remark
> An English countess goes upon the stage.
> A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
> Another bank defaulter has confessed.
> I keep my countenance,
> I remain self-possessed
> Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired
> Reiterates some worn-out common song
> With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
> Recalling things that other people have desired.

But with his incurable moral scrupulousness, he adds:

> Are these ideas right or wrong?

So Mr. Prufrock in the room where

> women come and go
> Talking of Michelangelo.

asks himself,

> Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
> And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
> Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

II

But the most complete expression of this aspect of Eliot's nature is to be found in the later and longer poem called "The Waste Land" (1922). The Waste Land of the poem is a symbol borrowed from the myth of the Holy Grail: it is a desolate and sterile country ruled by an impotent king, in which not only have the crops ceased to grow and the animals to reproduce, but the very human inhabitants have become incapable of having children. But the first thing that strikes us about this symbol is that it stands for the sterile side of the Puritan temperament. On the first pages we find again the theme of the girl with the hyacinths—themselves a symbol for the rearisen god of the fertility rites, who will save the rainless country from drouth—which has already figured in "La Figlia che Piange" and "Dans le Restaurant"—a memory which apparently represents for the poet some fulfillment foregone in youth and now agonizingly desired; and in the last pages it is repeated. We recognize throughout "The Waste Land" the peculiar conflicts of the Puritan turned artist: the horror of vulgarity and the shy sympathy with the common life, the ascetic shrinking from sexual experience and the distress at the drying up of the springs of sexual emotion, with the straining after a religious emotion which can be made to take its place. Yet though Eliot's spiritual and intellectual roots are still more firmly fixed in New England than is, I believe, ordinarily understood, there is in "The Waste Land" something more than the depression of a New Englander regretting an emotionally undernourished youth. The colonization by the Puritans of New England was merely an incident in that rise of the middle class which has brought a commercial-industrial civilization to the European cities as well as to the American ones. T. S. Eliot now lives in London and has become an English citizen; but the desolation, the esthetic and spiritual drouth, of Anglo-Saxon middle-class society oppresses London as well as Boston. The terrible dreariness of the great modern cities is the atmosphere in which "The Waste Land" takes place—amidst this dreariness, brief, vivid images emerge, brief pure moments of feeling are distilled; but all about us we are aware of nameless millions performing barren office routines, drying up their souls in interminable labors of which the products never bring them profit—people whose pleasures are so vulgar and so feeble that they seem almost sadder than their pains. And this Waste Land has another aspect: it is a place not merely of desolation, but of anarchy and doubt. In our post-War world of shattered institutions,

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strained nerves and bankrupt ideals, life no longer seems serious or coherent—all that we do is half-hearted at best and for a good deal that we are obliged to do we have no heart at all.

The poet of "The Waste Land" is living half the time in the real world of contemporary London and half the time in the haunted wilderness of the medieval legend. The water for which he longs in the twilight desert of his dream is to quench the spiritual thirst which torments him in the London dusk; and as Gerontion, "an old man in a dry month," thought of the young men who had fought in the rain, as Prufrock fancied riding the waves with mermaids and lingering in the chambers of the sea, as Mr. Appolinax has been imagined drawing strength from the deep sea-caves of coral islands—so the poet of "The Waste Land," making water the symbol of all freedom, all fecundity and flowering, of the soul, invokes an April shower of his youth, the song of the hermit thrush with its sound of water dripping and the vision of a drowned Phoenician sailor, sunk beyond "the cry of gulls and the deep sea swell," who has at least died by water, not thirst. The poet, who seems now to be traveling in a country cracked by drouth, can only feverishly dream of these things. One's head may be well stored with literature—but the heroic prelude of the Elizabethans has ironic echoes in modern London streets and modern London drawing-rooms: lines remembered from Shakespeare turn to jazz or associate themselves with the sound of phonographs. And now it is one's personal regrets again—the girl in the hyacinth-garden—"the awful daring of a moment's surrender which an age of prudence can never retract"—the key which turned once, and once only, in the prison of inhibition and isolation. Now he stands on the arid plain again, and the dry-rotted world of London seems to be crumbling about him—the poem ends in a medley of quotations from the literatures of several languages—like Gérard de Nerval, the poet is disinherited; like the author of the "Pervigilium Veneris," he is dumb and asks himself when he shall ever be able to sing; like Arnaut Daniel, in Dante, as he disappears in the refining fire, he begs the world to raise a prayer for his torment. "These fragments I have stored against my ruins."

"The Waste Land," in method as well as in mood, has left Laforgue far behind. Eliot has developed a new technique, at once laconic, swift and precise, for representing the transmutations of thought, the interplay of perception and reflection. Dealing with subjects complex in the same way as those of Yeats's poem "Among School-Children" and Valéry's "Cimetière Marin," Eliot brings to them a different technique. As May Sinclair has written of Eliot, his "trick of cutting his corners and his curves makes him seem obscure when he is clear as daylight. His thoughts move very rapidly and by astounding cuts. They move not by logical stages and majestic roundings of the full literary curve, but as live thoughts move in live brains."

Let us examine, as an illustration, the lovely nightingale passage from "The Waste Land." Eliot is describing a room in London:

> Above the antique mantel was displayed
> As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
> The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
> So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
> "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.

That is, the poet sees, above the mantel, a picture of Philomela being changed to a nightingale, and it gives his mind a moment's swift release. The picture is like a window opening upon Milton's earthly paradise—the "sylvan scene," as Eliot explains in a note, is a phrase from "Paradise Lost"—and the poet associates his own plight in the modern city, in which some "infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing," to quote one of Eliot's earlier poems, is somehow being done to death, with Philomela, raped and mutilated by Tereus. But in the earthly paradise, there had been a nightingale singing—Philomela had wept her woes in song, though the barbarous king had cut out her tongue, and with a beauty inviolable. With a change of tense, the poet reverts from the myth to his present situation:

> And still she *cried,* and still the world *pursues,*
> "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.

The song of birds was represented, in old English popular poetry, by such outlandish syllables as "Jug Jug"—so Philomela's cry sounds to the vulgar. Eliot has here, in seven lines of extraordinary liquidity and beauty, fused the picture, the passage from Milton and the legend from Ovid, into a single moment of vague poignant longing.

"The Waste Land" is dedicated to Ezra Pound, to whom Eliot elsewhere acknowledges a debt. And he has here evidently been influenced by Pound's "Cantos": "The Waste Land," like the "Cantos," is fragmentary in form and packed with literary quotation and allusion. In fact, the passage just discussed above bears a resemblance to a passage on the same subject—the Philomela-Procne myth—at the beginning of Pound's Fourth Canto. And we must now touch upon this addiction to literary quotation and reference which Eliot shares with Pound. Jules Laforgue had sometimes parodied, in his poems, the great lines of other poets—

> O Nature, donne-moi la force et le courage
> De me croire en âge . . . .

And Eliot had, in his early poetry, introduced phrases from Shakespeare and Blake for purposes of ironic effect. He has always, also, been very much given to prefacing his poems with quotations, and, as I have indicated, to echoing other poets. But now, in "The Waste Land," he carries this tendency to what one would suppose must be

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its extreme possible limit: here, in a poem of only 403 lines, reinforced with seven pages of notes, he manages to include quotations from, allusions to, or imitations of, at least thirty-five different writers (some of them, such as Shakespeare and Dante, laid under contribution several times)—to say nothing of popular songs; and to introduce passages in six foreign languages, including Sanskrit. And we must also take into consideration that the idea of the literary medley itself seems to have been borrowed from yet another writer, Pound. We are always being dismayed, in our general reading, to discover that lines which at least, we had thought, must have been the original creations of Eliot had been taken over or adapted from other writers—(sometimes very unexpected ones: thus, it appears now, from Eliot's essay on Bishop Andrewes, that the first five lines of "The Journey of the Magi," as well as the "word within a word, unable to speak a word," of "Gerontion," have been borrowed from Andrewes's sermons; and the "stiff dishonoured shroud" of "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" seems to be an echo of the "dim dishonoured brow" of Whittier's poem about Daniel Webster.) One would be inclined *a priori* to predict that all this load of erudition and literature would be enough to sink any writer, and that such a production as "The Waste Land," at best, must be a work of second-hand inspiration. And it is true that, in reading Eliot and Pound, we are sometimes visited by uneasy recollections of Ausonius, in the fourth century, composing Greek-and-Latin macaronics and mosaic-poems of lines from Virgil. Yet Eliot manages to be most effective precisely, in "The Waste Land," where he might be expected to be least original—he succeeds in conveying his meaning, in communicating his emotion, in spite of all his learned or mysterious allusions, and whether we understand them or not.

There is a curious contrast in this regard between Eliot and Pound. Pound's work *has* been partially sunk by its cargo of erudition, whereas Eliot, in ten years' time, has left upon English poetry an impression perhaps more striking than any other poet writing English. It is, in fact, probably true at the present time that Eliot is being praised too extravagantly and Pound, though he has deeply influenced a few, on the whole unfairly neglected. I should explain Eliot's greater popularity by the fact that, for all his fragmentary method, he possesses a complete literary personality in a way that Pound does not. Ezra Pound, fine poet though he is, does not dominate us like a master imagination—he rather enchants us like a miscellaneous collection of exquisitely chosen works of art. It is true that Pound, for all his inveterate translating, is a man of genuine originality—but his heterogeneous shorter poems, and the heterogeneous passages which go to make his longer poems, never seem to come together in a whole—as his general prose writing, apart from his poetry, gives expression to all sorts of ideas, all sorts of enthusiasms and prejudices, some ridiculous and some valid, some learned and some half-baked, which, though exceedingly valuable to his generation as polemic, as propaganda and as illuminating casual criticism, do not establish, maintain and develop a distinct reasoned point of view as Eliot's prose-writings do. T. S. Eliot has thought coherently and deeply about the relations between the different phases of human experience, and his passion for proportion and order is reflected in his poems. Eliot is, in his way, a complete man, and if it is true that he has himself accomplished what he has credited Ezra Pound with accomplishing—if he has brought a new personal rhythm into the language—so that he has been able to lend even to the rhythms, to the words themselves, of his great predecessors a new music and a new meaning—it is this intellectual completeness and soundness which has given his rhythm its special prestige.

And I want to suggest that another cause which may contribute to Eliot's extraordinary success is his possession of a dramatic instinct. We may be puzzled by Eliot's continual preoccupation with the question of the possibilities of a modern poetic drama—that is to say, a modern drama in verse. Why, we wonder, should he worry about drama in verse—why, after the age of Ibsen, Shaw and Tchekov, should he prefer plays in verse to plays in prose? Then we recognize that Eliot himself is essentially a dramatic poet. Mr. Prufrock and Sweeney are characters as none of the personages of Pound, Valéry or Yeats is—they have become a part of our modern mythology. And most of the best of Eliot's poems are based on unexpected dramatic contrasts: "The Waste Land" especially, I believe, owes a large part of its power to its dramatic quality, which makes it peculiarly effective read aloud. Eliot has even published recently in The Criterion two fragments of rather a promising play in a sort of jazz dramatic meter which suggests certain scenes in John Howard Lawson's "Processional."

At any rate, that first handful of Eliot's poems, brought out in the middle of the War (1917) and generally read, if at all, at the time, as some sort of modern *vers de société,* was soon found, as Wyndham Lewis has said, to have had the effect of a little musk that scents up a whole room. And as for "The Waste Land," it enchanted—and devastated—a whole generation. Attempts have been made to reproduce it—by Aldington, Nancy Cunard, etc.—at least a dozen times. And, as Eliot, lately out of Harvard, assumed the role of the middle-aged Prufrock and today, at forty, in one of his latest poems, "The Song of Simeon," speaks in the character of an old man "with eighty years and no tomorrow"—so "Gerontion" and "The Waste Land" have made the young poets old before their time. In London, as in New York, and in the universities both here and in England, they for a time took to inhabiting exclusively barren beaches, cactus-grown deserts, and dusty attics overrun by rats—the only properties they allowed themselves to play with were an

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occasional fragment of shattered glass or a sparse sprinkling of old broken bones. They had purged themselves of Masefield as of Shelley, for dry tongues and rheumatic joints. The modern city now seemed very horrible to poets who had always lived in the country; and, in the case of poets who lived in the city, the jazz they had once enjoyed now filled them with horror and despair. But in this case, we can forgive the young for growing prematurely decrepit: where even some of the finest intelligences of the elder generation read "The Waste Land" with blankness or laughter, the young had recognized a poet.

III

As a critic, T. S. Eliot occupies today a position of distinction and influence equal in importance to his position as a poet. His writings have been comparatively brief and rare—he has published only four small books of criticism—yet he has probably affected literary opinion, during the period following the War, more profoundly than any other critic writing English. Eliot's prose style has a kind of felicity different from that of his poetic style: it is almost primly precise and sober, yet with a sort of sensitive charm in its austerity—closely reasoned and making its points with the fewest possible words, yet always even, effortless and lucid. In a reaction against the impressionistic criticism which flourished at the end of the century and which has survived into our own time—the sort of criticism which, in dealing with poetry, tries to reproduce its effect by having recourse to poetic prose—T. S. Eliot has attempted a kind of scientific study of esthetic values: avoiding impressionistic rhetoric and *a priori* esthetic theories alike, he compares works of literature coolly and tries to distinguish between different orders of artistic effects and the different degrees of satisfaction to be derived from them. We sometimes follow his literary criticism with the same sort of eagerness and excitement with which we follow a philosophical inquiry.

And by this method, T. S. Eliot has done more than perhaps any other modern critic to effect a revaluation of English literature. Professor Saintsbury has played in literature much the same sort of role that he has played as a connoisseur of wines, that of an agreeable and entertaining guide of excellent taste and enormous experience; Edmund Gosse, often intelligent and courageous in dealing with French or Scandinavian writers, always appeared, when it came to English literature, a little the Librarian of the House of Lords—that is, always a little like a British Beef-Eater guarding the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London; and Paul Elmer More has been a moralist with little esthetic appreciation of literature. But T. S. Eliot, as an American, approaching English literature with an American's peculiar combination of avidity and detachment and with more than the ordinary English writer's reading in the literatures, ancient and modern, of the Continent, has been able to succeed as few critics have done in the excessively difficult task of considering English, Irish and American writers in relation to one another, and writers in English in relation to Continental writers. Eliot's criticism has had the effect, to an extraordinary degree, of discrediting the clichés of the text-books, and is even by way of establishing in the minds of the youngest generation a new system of literary clichés. With the ascendancy of T. S. Eliot, the Elizabethan dramatists have come back into fashion, and the nineteenth-century poets gone out. Milton's poetic reputation has sunk, and Dryden's and Pope's have risen. It is as much as one's life is worth nowadays, among young people, to say an approving word for Shelley or a doubtful word about Donne. And as for the enthusiasm for Dante—to paraphrase the man in Hemingway's novel, there's been nothing like it since the Fratellinis!

Eliot's position is, however, a sound one, and his influence has been salutary. Like Paul Valéry, Eliot believes that a work of art is not an oracular outpouring, but an object which has been constructed deliberately with the aim of producing a certain effect. He has brought back to English criticism something of that trenchant rationalism which he admires in the eighteenth century, but with a much more Catholic appreciation of different styles and points of view than the eighteenth century allowed. The Romantics fare badly before this criticism. Vague sentiment vaguely expressed, rhetorical effusion justifying bad art—these Eliot has coldly discouraged. For him, Byron is "a disorderly mind, and an uninteresting one"; Keats and Shelley "not nearly such great poets as they are supposed to be"; whereas the powers of Dryden are "wider, but no greater than those of Milton." Eliot is sometimes a little pedantic in his scorn for romantic carelessness and gush. In a recent essay on Richard Crashaw, he has confessed, with a certain superciliousness, his inability to understand one of the stanzas of Shelley's "Skylark," provoking thereby, in the English press, a number of letters from correspondents indignantly eager to explain it to him. And, indeed, though Shelley is often vague, is he any vaguer than a Symbolist poet?—than Laforgue or Mallarmé? He is simply vague in a different way. And, though Shelley abuses a certain vocabulary, does not Laforgue abuse his as badly? "For the first time perhaps," writes Eliot, "in verse of such eminence, sound exists without sense." Is this true? Or rather, is it not true that "sense" and "sound" are pretty difficult to consider separately? What *is* the "sense" of a poem? Is it not merely the effect which it produces?—and does not the effect depend upon sound? Shelley aimed at a vague musical effect, but so did the Symbolists—and they had their own way of cheating on the "sense"—of following the line of least resistance. It is perhaps true that one of the things

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which has distinguished the Symbolist from the Romantic movement has been an insistence upon intellectual discipline; yet Eliot has tended to overdo it in bringing into play this eighteenth-century common-sense to defend the Symbolists and the "metaphysical" poets against the Romantics: in the eighteenth century, after all, that kind of common-sense, if it fought the Romantics who were to drive it out of fashion, had cut also the other way against precisely those metaphysical poets who had preceded it. (It is perhaps worth noting, by the way, how closely T. S. Eliot's anti-Romanticism, stimulated first, it may be, by Babbitt at Harvard, seems to have been paralleled, in a recent incident, by Paul Valéry's point of view: Valéry lately delivered a lecture in which, defending the intelligibility of his own verse, he asserted that he was unable to understand the well known lines from Alfred de Musset:

> Les chants désesperés sont toujours les plus beaux,
> Et j'en sais d' immortels qui sont de purs sanglots.

and challenged one of the gentlemen in the audience, who had exclaimed that Valéry must be joking, to come upon the platform and explain them.) Yet a reaction against the degeneration, the decomposition, of Romanticism which has been taking place in certain quarters in our own time, was inevitable and necessary.

And there is also a romanticist criticism: the critic seizes upon a work of literature, and makes it a pretext for writing indirectly about his own personality and emotions. This tendency Eliot has done much to check, and in doing so, on the whole has done well—though he sometimes errs in the opposite direction by seeming to talk as if the critical discussion of a given work of literature could, in the last analysis, be anything but interpretative—as if it were possible to determine the properties of a novel or a poem as one can the properties of a chemical element (is it not even extremely doubtful whether we do not "interpret" the atoms themselves?). Let us consider, in this connection, a characteristic discussion of Shakespeare from Eliot's essay on "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca." "It seems to me," he writes, "that one of the chief reasons for questioning Mr. Strachey's Shakespeare, and Mr. Murry's, and Mr. Lewis's, is the remarkable resemblance which they bear to Mr. Strachey, and Mr. Murry, and Mr. Lewis respectively. I have not a very clear idea of what Shakespeare was like. But I do not conceive him as very like either Mr. Strachey, or Mr. Murry, or Mr. Wyndham Lewis, or myself." Then, however, Eliot goes on to set forth a view of the dying speeches of Shakespeare's tragic heroes—those final flares in which, self-undone, they invoke their forfeited nobility or bravery—which would put them in a light, not merely ironic, but almost comic, and make them resemble very closely Mr. Prufrock and the "broken Coriolanus" of "The Waste Land": they are "cheering themselves up," they are "endeavoring to escape reality." And Eliot has recently, writing in protest against the *fin de siècle* Baudelaire of Arthur Symons' translation, constructed a Baudelaire who is the image of the later T. S. Eliot.

Yet, Eliot, in spite of the extreme positions which the extreme champions of opposite positions have sometimes driven him to resort to, is not by any means unintelligent or unappreciative in regard, for example, to Keats and Shelley, or even in regard to Swinburne, a much worse example of the kind of thing he distrusts; and he has disarmed anyone who would charge him with dogmatism by introducing his essay on "The Perfect Critic" with a quotation from Rémy de Gourmont: "If a man is sincere, his great effort is to set up his personal impressions as laws."

The literary atmosphere since the War has in general been rather an Alexandrian one. In France, the old nineteenth-century criticism, represented by Sainte-Beuve or Taine, which did not differ much in some ways from nineteenth-century French novel-writing, has been replaced by a new kind of philosophical criticism, of which perhaps the most eminent practitioner is Albert Thibaudet, which deals almost exclusively in abstractions. The English have this kind of thing, too—Herbert Read and I. A. Richards—and they have also another type of criticism, of which the most brilliant representatives are Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf—a sort of tasting of books and personalities, which discriminates nicely between them, but does not particularly prefer one to another: one is supposed to have read everything and enjoyed everything and to understand exactly the reasons for one's enjoyment, but not to enjoy anything excessively nor to raise an issue of one kind of thing against another. There is something in T. S. Eliot of the pedantries of both these types of criticism. He is very much given, for example, to becoming involved in a sort of literary House-that-Jack-Built: "We find this quality occasionally in Wordsworth," he will write, "but it is a quality which Wordsworth shares with Shenstone rather than with Collins and Gray. And properly to appreciate Shenstone, we must read his prose as well as his verse. By his 'Essays on Men and Manners,' Shenstone attaches himself to the great French tradition of aphorism-writing of Vauvenargues, La Rochefoucauld and (with his wider range) La Bruyère; and we shall do well to read enough of Theophrastus to understand the kind of effect at which La Bruyère aimed. (Professor Somebody-or-other's book on 'Theophrastus and the Peripatetics' will help us to understand the intellectual atmosphere in which Theophrastus wrote and to appreciate the influences on his work, very different from one another, of Plato and Aristotle.") At this rate (though I have parodied Eliot), we should have to read the whole of literature in order to enjoy a single book.

If it was true of the romantic and impressionistic

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critics that they often made their subjects a present of all sorts of emotions and visions which they had drawn primarily from their own imaginations; it is also true, on the other hand, of the criticism since the War that it sometimes seems to deprive its subject of something. If the former invested his subject with an adventitious mystery and glamor, the latter tends to reduce it to a formula which excludes mystery and glamor altogether. When, however, we consider Eliot's criticism against this background of the criticism of his time, we are aware chiefly of his intense enthusiasm, as well as of his real humility and his willingness to pursue his inquiries till they reach those regions where all principles are doubtful and whence all conclusions must appear unsure.

Nor can Eliot's criticism any longer be reproached, as it has sometimes been in the past, with detaching literature from the rest of life and discussing it as if it could be dealt with *in vacuo*. The chief aim of his most recent book of essays, "For Lancelot Andrewes" (1928), seems to be to indicate the relation of his literary views to his views on other subjects: politics, religion and morals—a relation which had not been made clear in his earlier volume of literary essays, "The Sacred Wood" (1920). Eliot now declares himself, not merely a classicist in literature, but in religion an Anglo-Catholic and in politics a royalist. And as one reads "For Lancelot Andrewes," one recognizes, again, something familiar but hardly English, in spite of Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism and royalism. It is the New Englander's preoccupation with morals and his deep conviction of the sinfulness of man: Eliot admires Machiavelli because Machiavelli assumes the baseness of human nature as an unalterable fact; and he looks for light to the theologians who propose salvation, not through political or social reform, but only through "grace." Eliot apparently today regards "Evil" as some sort of ultimate fact, which it is impossible either to analyze or to correct. But from certain points of view, as I was suggesting, there is little in common between T. S. Eliot and the seventeenth-century English divines, as he describes them and gives us samples from their sermons. Bramhall and Andrewes have a certain richness, exist in a certain humid saturated atmosphere where even monumental outlines are blurred; whereas Eliot is more narrow, more colorless, more relentless, more clear. He has his own sort of graciousness, but he is, as the phrase is, a little thin-lipped. Nor is this merely a difference, I believe, between seventeenth-century prose and the prose of our own time. There is something of the Puritan theologian in Eliot; and this strain, at the same time that it may, in one sense, have had the effect of blighting his poetry, of preventing it from flowing very freely, is also probably, it seems to me, one of the causes of its intensity and richness. The stream, as the channel narrows, runs deeper, and in the waste land, tastes peculiarly sweet.

EDMUND WILSON.

Will the Young Plan Work?[1]

I

THE Dawes Plan had not tested Germany's capacity to pay, but only Germany's capacity to borrow. Why, then, was it felt necessary to call a new conference of experts and develop a new plan? If the Dawes Plan was an experiment to test Germany's capacity, why not let it run until we could see whether Germany could develop an export surplus, and if so, how large a surplus? Or, if she could not develop such a surplus, why not let it run until we could see whether Germany could continue to borrow, year after year, enough to meet her reparation obligations?

The official statement of the necessity for revision did not meet these points squarely. It spoke of the desirability of giving Germany a "definite task"—that is, of fixing the total amount for which Germany was to be liable, something which the Dawes Plan left open. The assumption was that if Germany knew the total, she would exert every effort to pay it and would get rid of the incubus as soon as possible. The other expressed reason was the desirability of getting rid of political control by the Allies over German tax-collections, and over the transfer of reparation funds. It assumed that the "transfer protection"—providing for the cessation of transfers if the exchange value of the mark were affected—ought to be abolished. But how could these things be safely done, if Germany's real capacity to pay were not definitely known?

The experts who met to frame the Young Plan were thus faced with a dilemma. They were supposed to make a final settlement. They were supposed to fix a definite amount for Germany to pay and a definite term for the annuities. They were supposed to remove the whole issue from the realm of political controversy, and to fix payments which could be so certainly made that no transfer protection would be necessary. But they had no test by which they could know how large the payments could safely be. Was this not an absurd task to give to any body of experts?

There must have been a compelling reason for such an absurdity. And the reason probably was a knowledge of the real failure of the Dawes Plan. If

[1] This is the second of a series of articles. The third will be published next week, and will deal with the International Bank.

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it continued much longer, one of two results was certain. Either reparation payments would shrivel and cease, and the whole structure would collapse, or foreigners would go on lending money to German governments and institutions until the total German indebtedness would threaten national bankruptcy, through inability to meet the service of the commercial debt and to retire it. One more experiment was necessary to see if there was any way out of this dilemma. Germany must be put rigidly on her own. A "final" (and much smaller) total must be fixed for her reparation indebtedness. It must be pretended that this decision was non-political and subject to no revision. Then Germany might, by some hook or crook, devise ways of paying. The Dawes Plan had seemed too safe, both to Germans and others. Only by pretending that a settlement was not an experiment, could a real experiment be made.

It is not necessary to accuse the experts of conscious double-dealing in order to suspect that some such consideration as this underlay the calling of the conference. They worked with the utmost perspicacity and good faith. Brought down to realities, they were for a long time on the brink of failure to report. Their final recommendations were amazingly ingenious.

II

One of the most important puzzles of the Young experts was to make an adjustment between the reparation sums demanded by the politicians and by public opinion in the Allied countries, and the much smaller total which would be necessary if Germany were to be given a fixed and definite task. It must be remembered that Germany, in the fifth year of the Dawes Plan, had been paying the standard annuity of 2,500,000,000 marks. Something like this total must be included in the new plan, if public opinion were to accept it. But it was far too large to have any approach to safety.

The device adopted was to divide the annuities into two distinct parts—"non-postponable" and "postponable." The non-postponable part is intended to provide the interest on bonds which may be sold to the public for cash, and so may immediately wipe out, at a discount, a large part of the indebtedness to the Allied governments. This device of "mobilization" or "commercialization" of the reparations debt had been discussed for a long time, as a means of simultaneously reducing it, and getting it out of the realm of inter-governmental relations. But the amount which could by any stretch of the imagination be so mobilized was not large enough to satisfy the Allies. Hence there was added to it the "postponable" part of the annuities, which are not to be commercialized by bond issues.

The non-postponable payments amount to 660,000,000 marks a year. They are to continue for thirty-seven years, and then are to cease. This is assumed to be the term of the bond issues on which they are to provide the interest and amortization. They are to be raised within Germany by a direct tax on the railroads, enjoying priority over any other tax or charge. They are to be paid in foreign currencies—that is, the marks collected within Germany wherewith to pay this amount *must* be exchanged. This is the solid part of the settlement, the "definite task."

The postponable part of the annuities varies from year to year, rising from 1,137,400,000 marks in the second year to 1,176,800,000 marks in the thirty-seventh year. From then on, they run for twenty-two years more. By some curious coincidence, their amounts are almost identical with the amounts which the Allies will have to pay the United States in retirement of the War debts, and the term for which they are to run is the same. By another curious coincidence, the Allies consent to reduce them if the United States should consent to reduce their War debt payments. The funds for these postponable annuities are to be obtained entirely from the German budget for the first thirty-seven years. After that, any profits of the International Bank will help to pay them. These annuities may be postponed for a maximum period of two years by the consent of a special committee including the governors of the central banks of the four chief countries concerned, if German exchange and economic life are seriously endangered by their collection and transfer. What will happen if the danger lasts beyond the maximum period, the experts' report does not specify. Such an eventuality may be left to the imagination.

III

It is easy to see how unsubstantial are the postponable part of the annuities. Most discerning economists would be as much astonished if they continue to be paid as they would have been if the original tremendous sums fixed for reparations, before the Dawes Plan, had been paid. It is on the cards that Germany will sooner or later be unable to transfer them, and that the occasion will be utilized for a renewed drive to revise or cancel the remaining part of the Allied War debts to the United States. The Allies have, in effect, admitted that they want these sums from Germany only to use for paying us.

But how about the non-postponable annuities? How safe will it be for investors to buy bonds for which these are to provide the interest? It is true that 660,000,000 marks is only a little more than one-quarter of what Germany paid during the fifth Dawes year. On the other hand, pre-war Germany had a favorable balance in her international accounts of only about 400,000,000 marks a year. This was the sum which she used to put into new foreign investments. Only by considerable pulling in of the belt could pre-War Germany have met such an annual charge as 660,000,000 marks.

We have seen that the War greatly injured Ger-

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many's capacity to pay by depriving her of territory which produced large amounts of iron and steel and other manufactures which could be exported, by necessitating greater imports of food, by literally decimating her foreign investments, and by injuring her shipping. Since the Dawes Plan, another handicap has arisen, of even greater magnitude. Germans have borrowed, all told, something like 14,000,000,000 marks from abroad, at high interest rates. These securities were sold at a discount, and the banking and flotation agencies retained a large share of the money so raised. While this money was flowing into Germany, it enabled her to meet reparation and all other foreign obligations. But if the flow should cease today, Germany would have to pay out a large sum annually to her post-war creditors, aside from reparations. Herr Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, estimated the amount of interest on these loans, at the end of 1928, at about 1,000,000,000 marks. This sum alone is more than twice as large as the German surplus of annual foreign payments before the War. It raises the total annual net payment across her borders to 1,660,000,000 marks—unless she keeps on borrowing more every year than she has to pay in interest and amortization. But the more she borrows, the larger the interest and amortization grow, and the more serious the eventual crisis becomes. With the interest on the reparation bonds a first charge on Germany, and with no provision for holding up their transfer in case the exchange value of the mark should fall, where do the post-War lenders to Germany come in? Indeed, if the effort to pay them, by failing, created an economic crisis in Germany, how could the interest on the reparation bonds themselves be paid?

There is a school of thought which attributes the failure of Germany to develop an export surplus under the Dawes Plan to the transfer protection itself. Before Germany can ship out a net surplus of goods and services, they argue, it is necessary for the exchange value of the mark to fall. When it falls, that means that it is cheaper for foreigners to buy goods in Germany than elsewhere. That means that tourists and others can get more for their dollars, francs or pounds by living in Germany than elsewhere. Internal German prices would rise if the mark should fall, it is true, but experience—as in France a few years ago—demonstrates that for a while they could not rise so rapidly. The resulting foreign demand for German goods and services, combined with the rise of internal prices, would encourage foreign consumption and decrease domestic consumption at the same time. It would direct German productive resources into export channels. And this outflow of exports would help to keep the mark from falling too low.

Whether this can happen in the present instance is one of the tests which the Young Plan is expected to make. But whether it can happen depends, of course, upon whether Germany can within a sufficiently brief period produce the necessary goods for export. This little twist of economic theory cannot get us far from the fundamental question concerning Germany's physical capacity to bring forth and ship out a surplus.

And here lies the last hope of the optimists. Have the billions of new capital flowing into Germany sufficiently enlarged and improved her plants and machinery, and the ability to turn out goods per labor hour, to meet the demands that will be placed upon her? From the beginning, economic authorities all over the world as well as in Germany herself have insisted that these loans ought to be "productive." How productive are they, as a matter of fact? No detailed and comprehensive study has been made. About half of them consist of privately offered borrowings, a large share of which is in the form of short-term credit. This cannot have gone to any extent into plants and machinery, but rather into working capital. Germany sorely needed working capital to restore her pre-war capacity, but no amount of working capital could, by itself, greatly increase her capacity over pre-War days. An analysis of the publicly offered loans from 1924 to October 31, 1928, made by the Agent-General for Reparations, shows that 60 percent of them went to the German Republic, states, provinces, counties, cities, public credit institutions, and public utility corporations. Less than 40 percent went to industrial or commercial corporations. The remainder went to religious organizations. Much of the money was used for public works—bridges, harbor improvements, and the like. Still more went into enlarging electric power equipment. And a considerable portion was used for working capital. It may be contended that all of such utilization is productive in the broadest of senses—even the religious instruction. But it is undeniable that a good deal of the money financed projects which do not themselves yield a return sufficient to pay the interest. And there is no indication of the amount of productive capacity added to Germany's pre-War status, or of the amount that could be turned to producing goods which might find a foreign market. Although, according to Robert R. Kuczynski,[1] the loans contribute to a revival of German economic activity, there is no answer to the question "whether the use of those loans will yield in marks the equivalent to the amount of dollars needed for the debt service and, if so, whether they will influence the German balance of payments so as to make the transfer easy."

We have a little evidence concerning the actual effect on physical production. On the basis of average production July 1924 to June 1926, the index for the year 1925 stood at 106.6, for 1926 at 100.8, for 1927 at 123.7 and for 1928 at about 120. An increase of 20 percent is encouraging, but by no means enough. How much farther Germany can go, nobody knows. The United States, which boasts of its rationalization, and has had every advantage of

[1] "American Loans to Germany," New York, The Macmillan Company.

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plentiful capital saved within its own borders, experienced an increase of industrial production between 1920 and 1926 amounting to 29 percent per worker employed. Can Germany do better? Furthermore, in doing better, can she get along without a corresponding rise in imports, in view of the fact that a large share of her manufactured products must be made out of imported materials?

The experts did not dare to leave all these uncertainties hanging in the air. They were intent upon removing the reparation controversy from the political sphere and making its settlement a business matter. The curious device which they were thus forced to adopt as a means of handling continuously the complications whose outcome they could not foresee —the Bank for International Settlements—must be the subject of the next article. GEORGE SOULE.

Washington Notes

WITH a stock market depression on his hands and an extra session of Congress which has practically exploded in his face, it cannot be said that these have been happy days for Herbert Hoover. There is no way of telling whether he has lost any of his personal popularity in the country, but politically speaking, he is rather in a mess—or so it seems to me. Furthermore, judging from the worn looks of the White House Secretariat, I believe they have the same depressing notion. For one thing, there is apprehension that, despite the reassuring and resounding statements from administration spokesmen about the essential soundness of business conditions, the net result of the unprecedented crash in stock prices will be a shrinkage of the buying power, or at any rate the buying disposition, which will have an unfavorable industrial and trade effect. This may not be felt for a month or so to come, but there are a good many capable economists who think it inevitable. The losses sustained by a vast number of people in the market smash unquestionably mean, for one thing, a corresponding decrease next year in the treasury revenues from 1929 income taxes. This, it seems reasonable to assume, renders impossible the tax cut upon which Mr. Hoover, without saying much about it, had really set his heart, and which the Rev. Dr. Ogden Mills had figured out to be a lead-pipe certainty.

With such a tax cut as the outstanding feature of the regular session so soon to begin, Herbert could have contemplated the futility of the tariff fight more calmly, and borne with serenity the charges of lack of leadership and courage which now flow in a more or less steady stream from Democrats and Progressives. But with no tax reduction to offset the clamor of the minority, and in view of his lack of the Coolidge gift for presidential propaganda, Mr. Hoover's political horizon does not seem so bright as it did. Of course, the London naval disarmament conference may result in so great a stride toward peace that it will sweep all the political clouds away, make the carpers and critics of the present seem trivial and insignificant, and restore the roses to the wan cheeks of the presidential political advisers, counselors, aides and comforters. And then again, the conference may not ring the bell at all. It may muddle along and prove only mildly successful, which, in view of the dramatic setting of the MacDonald visit and the declared Hoover hopes, would make it a political failure for both of them, regardless of the actual achievement. In other words, the London conference will have to be a spectacular success in order to be a political success. There is no secret that those about Mr. Hoover who are interested in practical domestic politics, and who are themselves tied up with the fortunes of the administration, count heavily upon the conference to establish a prestige which no amount of criticism by disgruntled elements of his own party, or by the Democrats, can affect. Perhaps it will work out that way, but at this writing no one can look so far ahead.

The fundamental trouble with Mr. Hoover, politically, appears to be that he does not know how to make his popular strength in the country count. Either that, or he is timid about trying to do so. Several times within the last few months he has been on the point of putting out a statement that would have simultaneously denounced the Democrats for insincerity and inconsistency, and the high-revision advocates among the regulars of his own party for trying to enact, under the pressure of the tariff lobby, a bill outrageously and unjustifiably raising rates. There is no question that that was the way he felt about it; and looking back, there is no question that had he spoken clearly along those lines he would be in a better position today. The bill might still have been killed, but he would have strengthened himself from the personal political standpoint. The reason he did not speak, the medicine ball boys say, was because he did not think it necessary. He believed, up to a week or so ago, that the measure could be got into conference and that the House conferees would be strong enough to create the sort of bill he could sign. Hence, he saw no use of needlessly offending regular Republican Senators whose support he would need on other measures.

When he finally did speak out, on Thursday last, what he said was very much milder than the bold and slashing statement he had been urged to make. He said nothing himself about the activities of the coalition, though he quoted some of his Senatorial callers as fearing that it intended to refuse "adequate protection to industry"—as though the Fordney-McCumber law had never existed! Neither did he say one word about the ravenous high-tariff wolves, who have been doing their best to produce a bill so bad he couldn't sign it. He merely demanded a bill within two weeks, something he is very unlikely to get. His prestige is certainly lower with this kind of statement than if he had made none.

Some of the Hoover Republicans hope, I hear, to have the whole business side-tracked in the regular session. That, however, is not the idea of the Democratic-Progressive coalition, which will insist upon keeping the bill in its place on the calendar and will send it to conference if possible. By that time, the people really will be bored with the subject and the outcome, though not likely to be objectionable to Mr. Hoover, will be relatively unimportant politically. The best bet is that there will be no bill in the regular session any more than in this one. But whether there is or not, the fact remains that, place the

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responsibility where you will, the Hoover extra session is a failure and the Hoover party leadership did not develop. That is why, with a bear market and no tax cut, he will need something gaudy as well as real from the London Conference to maintain prestige. Remember, the prospect is that he will continue through his administration with a Senate he cannot handle. Ordinarily, a Republican President is confronted by Progressive and Democratic opposition, but has the solid support of the regulars; Mr. Hoover is the first Republican President anyone can remember who lacks the latter. Lack it he certainly did in the tariff fight, and if the general biliousness of the Senators who count most in the regular Republican ranks is any sign, he will lack it a little more in the next session than he did in this. The basic fact is that these fellows do not regard Mr. Hoover as a regular Republican. They didn't before his nomination, or afterwards, and they don't now. He just does not "belong," as Coolidge, Harding and Taft did. Personally, I think this ought to be marked up in his favor, but it will not facilitate the enactment of his program.

The curious thing is that this feeling toward him among the machine Republicans by no means endears him to the Progressives—though you would think it would. Nor does it cause the Democrats to regard him kindly. Both these elements in the Senate cherish infinitely more enmity toward Hoover than they did toward Coolidge or Harding. Perhaps one explanation is that Mr. Hoover is neither one thing nor the other. He has not the regular viewpoint, and he certainly is not in sympathy with the Progressives. Another is that he is too active-minded. I have repeatedly pointed out here that solemn inertia in a President is the surest way to popularity. Of the Hoover unpopularity among the three elements in the Senate, there is no question at all. One of his White House aides, conceding this, has an answer which, all things considered, is not so bad: "Yes," he says, "there isn't anybody who is for him at all—except about 30,000,000 voters." It may be so, but the real question is: How long will they continue to be for him, if he continues to bog down as he has at this session?

Washington. T. R. B.

A Little Dream

AS for me, I have lately returned from Mexico, where the bright air shone over the clean towns, and the sidewalks were swept and free. I call to mind now those tiny Indian villages, without trash and filth; and more ambitious places like Puebla, Cuernavaca or San Angel, the streets and the public squares, and the entrances to numberless churches, set out with trees and flowers, flagged with stone, rich with columns or fountains or tiled seats, and nowhere was there any litter and drifting rubbish, no indignity and disorder, no sticks, scraps, manure, domestic odds and ends, private refuse. But that, I remind myself, was a backward country; and then I remember the paper I see every day, drifting along the sides of Fifth Avenue, our rich and famous thoroughfare, the trash and slovenly sweeping, the look of thick-skinned haste and oversight and indifference. Along that south walk, winding across the end of Central Park, I have seen the border of paper scraps, strings, burnt matches, cigarette butts and what not, swept by cleaners and promenaders to the edges, where it has all multiplied and mussed for the long summer season. On Thirty-Fifth Street, twenty feet from Fifth Avenue, my taxi runs over a battered old coal-scuttle, crashing about under the wheels. Around and down the subway stair, at the rear of the world's richest opera-house in the world's richest city, there are papers, manure, dust, and even banana skins on the most comfortable days. In front of a smart house in the East Fifties, I have seen carrot tops spilled from the garbage cans that nestle close to the façade, where the happy carriers have tossed things lightly about. We will not speak of obscurer regions, down town, west and east, where the streets sometimes would puzzle tourists from anywhere. Of all the cities I know, Rome, London, Budapest, Vienna, Madrid, Venice, Florence, Granada, Mexico, Naples, the dirtiest by far is New York.

Recently, in the midst of all the hammering and black thunder, the spouting, exposures and accusations delivered on election platforms and printed in the papers—Mr. Walker's and Signor LaGuardia's aspirations toward mayordom—I have conjured up a vista of what might happen, in these insignificant directions of order, garnishing and municipal style, if the little Italians should ever come into control.

As everybody knows, they are an easily ignored race among us, largely simple people from the south of Italy, where Magna Grecia was once honored for its gifts to civilization, but where for a long time now the standard of living has been low, though the muscles, teeth, hair, voices and ear for music have been something better than in our best factory towns. Thousands of these Italians have been only Wops, working the mines, selling fruits and vegetables, waiting in restaurants, bootlegging a little, liking garlic, buying their wives fur coats, finding themselves attended only when there was voting to be done. Those, meanwhile, that have come from a different class at home, princes even, have been less noticed, their voices have been little heard. Italy as a country lacks the gift of promoting herself abroad; her propaganda can be sonorous and declamatory, but it has not the particular twist that takes hold on the Nordic conscience and mind, which tends to think of the Italian spirit as based on blue skies, spaghetti, sex and tenors.

Is it possible that under the lure of that *belleza* of which they speak so often, beauty for its own sake, they would sweep this city clean and give it something of that handsome air and urban elegance that Rome has everywhere you turn? Rome, that city of fountains—you sense their cool stone, you hear their columns of water falling, in this street or that square, one after another, bold, urbane, proud fountains, with plentiful, clear water pouring out! Might these Italians set up fountains in our rich city, which has now only a few dripping naval heroes, some Victorian, drab basins in Central Park, a few dingy bird baths, and, by way of civil ambition, that fountain on Fifty-Ninth Street, where the Avenue first opens on the great park, a fountain with an ugly bowl and a pedestal that is tasteless and dull, and basin mouldings that have been down in places, crumbled and unrepaired, for months? What if, when a vast bridge from the city to the mainland is to be opened, or dedicated, or whatever is done, some of the excess millions

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should go not only to a proper grant, but also a small part of it, of course, to a good band of music and some display of flowers and garlands? That would be indeed backward and comical, just as it would be if some artist or singer or author died, and the city took some official notice of it. I remember once in Florence, when a baritone at the opera died, the entire parish of San Fernando, where he had been born, celebrated his fame, and all the little shops, the kind that take in three or four *lire* a day in that poorest part of the town, closed in his honor. And if some of that was not only a love of fame and glory and art but also a taste for pomp, pageantry and celebration, well, they are city splendors, too, its escape from mechanism, grime and multiplicity.

Meanwhile we must ask, what of the power of power, speed and mass, and the persuasion of a desire to be no more regarded as inferior? And what of the persuasion of comfort, plenty of hot water, a good big diamond ring for your wife and one for yourself if you choose, and an automobile in the offing, and children determined to speak only English and be Americans? I remember once, on an Italian boat coming home from Naples, a couple who sat across the table from me. He had had a snow contract with the street-cleaning branch of our municipal service, and though his sense of decorum implied that he had done no more than his duty, the profusion of his wife's jewels, the French wines they ordered at every meal and passed about to others at the table, and the whole cheerful and redundant air and easy optimism of both man and wife, implied that the good winter snows had removed themselves without too much subtraction from the sum accounted them. This family, both of them born in America and never before in their parents' *patria,* were now returning after a week's stay on land. They had heard how wonderful and grand everything was, back in Italy, the old folks had talked of nothing else. They had at last been able to get off. Got themselves a swell stateroom. They had heard how cheap it all was in the old country. But the very first lunch in Naples, when they let the waiter select the menu and the drinks, and didn't ask no prices, cost them nine dollars; can you beat it? Then they went to the town where the old folks came from. Up on a hill, near Caserta. They had to take an automobile from Naples. Well, there was a house with five rooms their cousins lived in, and all they had to cook on was one hole for charcoal, which they had to fan all the time; they cooked all their meals on that. So then their cousin had to work all morning just getting the lunch cooked, and there wasn't any bath-tub and they had to go and bring the drinking water from the town fountain. They had stayed overnight, and then had run up to Rome, which had nothing to see, so then they telegraphed to Naples and said change that return passage to the first boat.

Perhaps I am wrong about everything. Even now we may be about to see monuments erected over the city, set there for the elegy of the past and the flame of the future; and fountains refreshing the eyes and allowing our sight to wander ahead instead of upward only, where the height of sheer walls and the skyline of buildings provides at present all the city's beauty. Perhaps the workmen on one of these high buildings on Forty-Second Street yesterday when I passed at the noon hour, were not throwing pieces of gnawed bread, paper containers for coffee, lunch wrappings, anywhere around them that they felt like. Perhaps I am only doing what Pausanias accused Pisander of, when he wrote of the hydra. "Pisander, speaking of the hydra, multiplied the number of the heads to make the monster more terrible and to add to the dignity of his own verses."

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Russian Exhibition

SIR: The Paxton Hibben Memorial Hospital Fund is sponsoring a Russian bazaar at 17 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York City, where, for November and December, a large collection of Russian peasant handicraft will be offered for sale. The proceeds will be used for the equipment and maintenance of a Children's Hospital, bearing the name of Paxton Hibben, soon to be opened in the Soviet Union, probably in the Crimea on the Black Sea, so that children suffering from tuberculosis of the bone may have the benefit of the mild climate and sea air. There could be no more fitting memorial to Paxton Hibben, who died less than a year ago, and whose work in behalf of Russian children, during and since the post-war famine years, will thus be continued.

New York City. GREGORY STRAGNELL.

The Psychology of Philosophers

SIR: In a bland and perfectly self-assured review of Alexander Herzberg's refreshing work, "The Psychology of Philosophers," Mr. Paul Weiss, in your issue of October 23, spoke of the author's "empirical, dubious evaluations," basing this criticism, no doubt, on Mr. Herzberg's generalized cataloguing of a few foibles of our philosophers. Perhaps these foibles never give —as the reviewer has always inclined to feel—"basic and penetrating analyses." Yet—basic and penetrating analyses to and for what? Certainly the ideals which the philosophers pursue *as men* give basic and illuminating examples of their psychological natures, which the author expressly seeks to trace. No man—nor even philosopher, including Mr. Weiss himself—ever obtained any "real clue" to the nature of man as philosopher by studying the nature of philosophy itself. He either obtained ethereal, disembodied spectres in quest of shadow ogres—*i. e.,* the Absolute, Good, etc.—or an outline of men whose psychological and emotional natures prompted their occupation and concern with real, vital and personally momentous problems. The review of Mr. Herzberg's work is indeed "partial" in its understanding and attitude towards a particular approach to philosophers as flesh-and-blood men. Mr. Weiss, I daresay never moved in such an atmosphere.

New York University, New York City. I. G. KOSCH.

"Pussy-foot" Johnson Protests

SIR: In your issue of October 16, Mr. Harry Kronick argues "the analogy between the present method of endeavoring to bring about temperance and the method of solving international problems by war." Referring to prohibition, he concludes that "our present method, because it is unnatural and, therefore, wrong, is impossible of success." He asks, "Is reason or force, the natural and, therefore, proper and effective method of solving human problems? . . ."

Let me suggest a few questions to Mr. Kronick:

Would he suggest reason or force in the prevention of bigamy, adultery, arson, murder or any other crime?

Would he resort to reason or force in collecting the income tax?

Would he resort to reason or force in collecting a debt from a crooked defaulting creditor?

Would he resort to reason or force in preventing the peddling of narcotic drugs, impure food, spoiled meat or infected milk?

Of course, reason should be applied to all of these things, but when reason fails, society is compelled to resort to force. Society must protect itself.

En route, Osawattomie, Kan. W. E. JOHNSON.

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George Meredith

The Life of George Meredith, by Robert Esmonde Sencourt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 342 pages. $3.50.

GEORGE MEREDITH has waited long for a biographer. Hammerton's rich collection of anecdotes and the withdrawn biography of Mr. S. M. Ellis were only preparatory collections of material, while Mr. J. B. Priestley's biography in the new "English Men of Letters" series was, of course, limited in scope. Mr. Robert Sencourt's life is the first one that has had full access to all the relevant material, including unpublished letters and poems, scattered about in English and American private collections. Mr. Sencourt has the data for a full judgment; and I think he has succeeded in making a just one. His work is a brave sally in the battle to establish Meredith in the place he should rightfully occupy in English letters, a place usurped in our generation by the much more provincial figure of Thomas Hardy.

George Meredith's life was lived in the style of his novels: it is not merely that he imaginatively projected himself out of the tailor's shop where he was born, and at fourteen took charge of his own education and sent himself to one of the best schools in Europe, the Moravian school at Neuwied; but, like his novels, his life had with all its abundance of friendships and fine conversations and vivacious journeys, a broken tempo and a tragic consummation: his first wife, Peacock's daughter, deserted him and died insane under conditions he had partly created; while at sixty, he, the most vigorous of men, the teacher of athletes, still capable of fierce and passionate friendships with young women, was condemned to the ignominy of an invalid's chair, ending his life slowly, without the benefit of the dramatic climax it deserved. He did not will his fate; but he might have imagined it.

Meredith's actual origins and associations he surrounded with a mystery that was not without pretense. The descendant of at least three generations of Hampshire tradesmen, he liked to picture himself as a Celt, part Irish and part Welsh, with more than a tinge of noble blood in him. In his own lifetime he assiduously concealed the fact that he was born in Portsmouth, and at the end he expressed a wish that no biography should be written of him, so that his work should stand by itself. These airs, these inane concealments, would damn the man, were it not for the fact that he devoted his life to their exposure and analysis: he who has read "Evan Harrington," "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," "Harry Richmond," and "Modern Love" knows Meredith better than he who has merely looked at the outward events of his life. "If we want to know the essential life of Meredith," Mr. Sencourt writes, "we must know him better as a writer than as a man"; and this is true not merely because Meredith the writer is a completer being, but because almost every book he wrote is a commentary upon his own shortcomings: vanities, egoisms, bravadoes.

Meredith was never more the hero than when he was exposing "The Egoist": he reached the height of objectivity when he penetrated his own masks and illusions. Out of the tension created by a noble, capacious mind pulling against a somewhat meretricious and misdirected character, his novels, and some of his finest poems, were written. Divorce the man from his work and we have a picture of the Egoist as Writer, haranguing his friends with brilliant paradox, intent upon dazzling his aristocratic Janets with a wit and a presence that should conceal the threads and the tailor's tape which still clung to his own garments: a pathetic spectacle. But Meredith disciplined himself, flayed himself, in his work; and he emerged from the ordeal a naked and beautiful figure, without a tatter of pretense on his back. A weaker man might well have stewed in his weakness and succumbed to snobbishness; not Meredith. Making no concessions to the public, he made none to himself, either; and as it is from his own pen that we best know his failings, so it is by those efforts that he triumphantly vindicates himself.

Mr. Sencourt does not essentially alter the current picture of Meredith; but he amplifies it, models it, and surrounds it with relevant detail. In the difficult parts of Meredith's life, like the quarrels with his first wife and his curious seclusion in later years from his second, he presents the facts with quiet sympathy—a sympathy that does justice to the whole situation and does not unduly lighten the onus that falls on Meredith. He has not had the temptation to treat the artful passages artfully; and his literary judgments, though subordinated to the biography proper, are sound. The curious thing is that we have been forced to wait so long for such a consideration of Meredith's life and work. What is it then that has kept him from getting his due?

Partly, it was George Meredith's misfortune to accomplish two things very well, to be both a poet and a novelist; and he did this, not as Thomas Hardy did when he retreated after his tussle with a Victorian public into the privacies of verse, but during the same span of his life. There is an academic prejudice in favor of the specialist; and the fact that the body of his verse is far more mature, and more maturely beautiful, than Swinburne's, for example, has perhaps kept people from acknowledging that the novels were on an equally high level—or vice-versa. Then, too, Meredith was a brilliant writer: his mind continually effervesced in epigram, and in metaphors that were as audacious as his wit; nowhere do we hear of his keeping a notebook, and the reason presumably is that these flashes occurred spontaneously in the act of writing, facilitated, it may be, by his habit of conducting conversation in an annoyingly good literary style. Whatever one may say of the present generation of critics in England, one can hardly convict them of brilliance; and it is but natural that they should tend to speak disparagingly of a writer who, though dead, might accidentally slay them as an afterthought in a malicious phrase.

Finally, Meredith's vision of life had a classic firmness and strength; it demanded taut strenuous bodies and finely tempered minds; and if the yellow nineties encouraged slackness in the first, it cannot be said that the generation that listened to Mr. H. G. Wells's loose exhortations had much practice in the second. Meredith's philosophy, it is plain, can mean little to the dull, the indolent, the world-weary; for there is nothing more irritating to the ill man than to be reminded of the joys and duties of health: hence, though as psychologist Meredith had little to learn from the Freudians about either the unconscious or the wish, he is almost a closed book to the generation that emerged from the War. One cannot fancy Meredith creeping with a dusty shrug of despair into Anglo-Catholicism; nor can one fancy him writing cramped little quatrains about gentlemanly aspirations in gentlemanly moonlight; nor yet can one see him making a cult of smart bodies without minds, or accepting smart minds whose experience of life is only paper deep.

It is easy enough to rationalize Meredith's unpopularity

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today by making a parade of his literary defects: his relentless cleverness, his baroque elaboration of superficial detail, and his frequent failure to achieve in his novels that sense of progression which is part of the esthetic pleasure of a good story. These defects, and many minor ones, are all undoubtedly there: defects of taste, defects of workmanship; but the whole cast and tendency of Meredith's work is not ruined by them, any more than Shakespeare is destroyed by his bombast and by his concessions to the pit. Though Meredith went through life attired in the brisk sensible garments of Victorian radicalism, a contemporary of Darwin and Mill, a friend of Morley, Leslie Stephen, Fitzgerald, influenced as a novelist by Dickens and as a prose writer by Carlyle—though Meredith was affected by the ideas and beliefs and idols of his age, his work bears no visible date, for its central core was not Victorian, but classic, pagan, and, in an unacademic sense, humanist. He brought the courage of the athlete into the realm of mind; his wit is a dance, and his soberest battles with reality, the unfathomable antagonist, end with a fencer's swift thrust at the heart.

If "good form," as a friend of mine has put it, is the art of shamming dead, then Meredith lacked it: he had the vice of being alive. There are other English novelists one might miss more, were their work suddenly blotted out; but there is none so likely to have a claim, not merely upon our own generation, but upon many other generations to come. Dickens' sentimentalism grows more repulsive with the passing years; Thackeray is scarcely better; Fielding has too blunt a sense of human motive, and Thomas Hardy's determinism seems more and more a clumsy intrusion upon the inner logic of events. Meredith has something that will outlast the authors who so well satisfied their own day: he has a sense of the eternal salt and sweet and bitterness, the sudden glory and demonic frustration, of human life. Though he wrote the finest idyll of young love in modern literature, he had the courage not to sweeten it with a happy ending; unlike the desperate Shakespearean tragedy with its comic interludes, life was for Meredith, in his novels, a high comedy with a tragic consummation.

Mr. Robert Sencourt has done well to place the image of Meredith in our midst. Meredith is a criterion. If he has not that perfection of considered mediocrity which would endear him to the prematurely aged, he has, at least, this quality that is necessary for a standard: he will out-top most of the personalities and works we seek to measure.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

The Unhappy Warrior

Death of a Hero, by Richard Aldington. New York: Covici-Friede. 398 pages. $2.50.

RICHARD ALDINGTON'S first novel is very moving, but it is also very confused. Each of its disparate elements is presented with intense sincerity, ruthless directness, and a vigorous, magnificently sustained hatred of middle-class England which exalts the reader to the point of full participation in the author's contempt. As polemic, the War has given us nothing more stirring than this novel, to which the reader surrenders himself with gratitude for its power; but the novel lacks a certain catalysis which alone might fuse its elements into a whole that would stand as the truth. The story may be retold briefly as follows: The narrator (unnamed, therefore Aldington) met during the War a young painter called Winterbourne. On November 4, 1918, while Winterbourne and his company were lying flat and waiting for a British bombing squad to wipe out a German machine-gun nest, Winterbourne rose suddenly to his feet and was killed by the enemy fire. Aldington was persuaded that his friend had committed suicide. Putting together all that Winterbourne had told him of himself, and adding what he was later able to learn by inquiry, he came to the conclusion, not only that Winterbourne's act was deliberate, but that the false and shabby ideals of Victorian England and the smug heartlessness of Georgian England were responsible for his death. And straightway, Aldington began to write this novel as an act of contrition, a measure of atonement for his share in England's blood-guilt.

The story takes him back to the marriage and life of Winterbourne's grandparents, on to his parents, and forward to the young painter's encounters in London just before the War. The last third of the book is given over to the British front; it is the most straightforward and unsentimentalized depiction of an individual's employment in the trenches that I have read. It is heroism without heroics and reality without "realism," timeless and absolutely absorbing.

The disgust which one does not feel in reading of the hero's life at the front, is felt on two occasions in the English scene: once, on learning how Winterbourne's mother received the news of his death; again, in the course of his furlough home, on observing his reception by his wife and his mistress. Aldington seems to have built up his sweeping condemnation of middle-class England on these two incidents; that is to say, these incidents are the gravest proof he adduces of his right to saddle England with the ultimate responsibility for Winterbourne's death.

There is some confusion here. One can write a credible and convincing history of a particularly despicable family, as Aldington has written of the Winterbournes. The condemnation of an era (such as the age of Victoria) can also be written, and that, too, Aldington has in part attempted. Likewise, materials are present for an attack upon a flabby and pretentious society or group, as Aldington has attacked pre-War Chelsea. But this ugly family cannot be said to typify middle-class England, for the reason that its ugliness lies in the natures of the men and women portrayed, and is only incidentally a result of the vicious clauses in the middle-class code. And this bohemian Chelsea did not display an absolutely condemnable callousness, if only because people at home were not allowed to know the truth about life at the front, and because the Winterbournes of the War left all mention of the front to the *official* heroes—those who, having escaped from Germany, or been flattered into the game of propaganda, were impressed by the War Office into talking for particular ends. This being (as it seems to me) true, one cannot accept the validity of the author's conclusion, that middle-class England murdered George Winterbourne. Nor do I believe he has the right to excoriate England for not going about in sackcloth and ashes since 1918. There are those to whom the Cenotaph is still the monument to *their* dead; there are others, equally helpless and innocent, to whom the War was and remains an incomprehensible and mysterious plague that came, endured, and is gone.

What is interesting—not about the novel itself, which is full of movement and spiritual distinction and much sad eloquence, but about the author—is what the War did to him. Richard Aldington has enjoyed for some fifteen years a small but honorable reputation, here as well as in Eng-

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land, as a cultivated man of letters, a poet of frequent delicacy and occasional vigor, an accomplished translator from the Greek and the French. Had there been no War, he would quite probably have written a "literary" novel, art-conscious and full of "felicitous phrasing." The cannon drowned out the clatter of studio tea-cups; his youth was immolated in the holocaust, and he emerged from the War loathing the society in which he had been about to make for himself an easy and bohemianly-secure place. He is one of that infant's handful of sensitive and thoughtful combatants who remain unhappy about the dead, and doubtless about themselves. In France, towards 1920, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle tried in two or three books to piece together the fragments of a war-broken existence and to chart his own and his generation's future. He came too early for coherence. We are now in the spate of a stream of German books, in which the War and the post-War generations are wondering about the Germany where they must perforce live. In America, Cummings' "Enormous Room," a story of a boy whose life was snapped in two almost incidentally to the War, was never read enough and its import was almost wholly ignored. Dos Passos' "Three Soldiers," unveiling another phase of the tragedy, was sincerely characterized by a good citizen and excellent temporary-officer as the story of "Soldiers, hell! Three gutless wonders!" . . . although he probably thought that Guy Empey and Sergeant Peat wrote great books. Winterbourne, as the readers of this passionately idealistic novel will learn, was no "gutless wonder," but he was one of the thousands of sensitive men who went to war, and about these sensitive men, in Russia and Serbia and Italy and elsewhere, we shall, I imagine, continue for some time to hear. And it is only through such men that we ever discover what war, in truth what the world, is.

LEWIS GALANTIÈRE.

Mysticism and Money

Sonnets from a Lock Box, and Other Poems, by Anna Hempstead Branch. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 126 pages. $2.

UPON FAMILIAR reality Mrs. Branch once turned eyes as fresh as Miss Millay's in "Renascence," and a more brooding spirit. So the Christian Platonism of "The Monk in the Kitchen" and the mysticism of "Ere the Golden Bowl Is Broken" or of "Dreams" are in every anthology. Her place in our poetry is secure, if slight. In this volume, however, there is nothing to extend that place. Thirty-eight sonnets report her meditations on money as evoked by a legacy in a safe deposit box. Surely a theme ripe for some such pageantry as "The Man Against the Sky"! But ripeness is in poets, not in themes; and Mrs. Branch's gaze, no longer fresh and not yet wise, turns backward now to the spent glamors of astrology, alchemy, and the "Arithmetic God"—to zodiacs, astrolabes, and Uranian trances. Astonished that she may sit securely and "cut off coupons in a little book," she is more moved by the magic than by the meaning of money, like a child playing king with a jeweled scepter. She indulges in a little easy irony about the Bird of Freedom, a little ready sentiment about the "unpaid toiler" and the "childish slave," but what she dreams about are symbols for their own sakes. Substituting coins for "the brazen pan and iron pot" of her kitchen, her old love of Shapes has divorced all saving utility. Such a mysticism is an escape into mere vapor.

Of the score of simpler poems, a few mitigate this sense with direct, if rather vague, reports of emotional experience. Here a more tangible mysticism is extended to children at play, romantic criminals, her dogs, her kitten. But only "In the Beginning Was the Word" and "The Name" (which is already in the Rittenhouse anthology) contrive that spiritual tension between concrete materials, that instancy of emotion to fact, without which mystical poetry is neither good mysticism nor good poetry. Unhappily, these two poems throw no fresh illumination upon reality.

CLARENCE BRITTEN.

Novel on the Stairs

How Like a God, by Rex Stout. New York: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.

"HOW LIKE A GOD" presents Bill Sidney, a somewhat fastidious and cultivated man in his forties, at the last important crisis of his career: he is climbing the stairs to a shabby little apartment on the third floor to commit a crime that will most certainly send him to the madhouse or to the electric chair. It is not until the novel is two-thirds of the way along—and he is halfway up the stairs—that we discover just who the drab is who waits for him and what the nature of her perverse hold on him is. Meanwhile we have learned, by a gradually unfolding and expanding revelation of his own reflections, what manner of man Bill Sidney is at this moment. And we have every important clue as to how he got that way. Mr. Stout discards the usual chronological sequence in telling his story. We pick up facts and feelings, now here, now there, out of Sidney's troubled past, until we are able to piece together all that there is to be known about his unsatisfactory affairs with women. Incapable of any decisive action, Sidney, we learn by degrees, has been walking all his life long into the trap which his weak desperation is now about to spring on him. His last decisive gesture is somewhat like Spandrell's in Aldous Huxley's "Point Counterpoint." Spandrell's collapse was the product of a social and intellectual perversity, Sidney's of innate irresoluteness and a sexual fixation. As brilliant conceptions of modern human psychoses, these two are on a parity. And Mr. Stout's exploration has a shade the better of it because of its greater range and thoroughness.

F. H.

Contributors

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LEWIS GALANTIÈRE is a critic, translator and banker who has lived for many years in France.

CLARENCE BRITTEN was an editor of The Dial, and a contributor to the symposium "Civilization in the United States."

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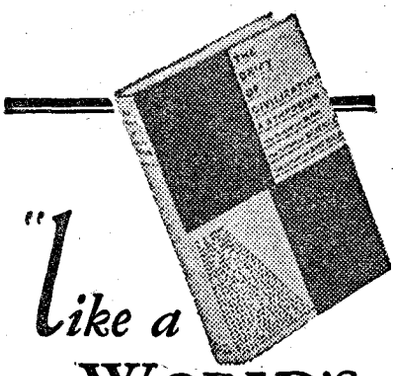

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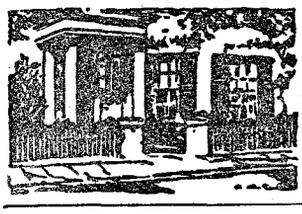

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